

V. 9. 41
THE
HISTORY

OF

Ancient Paganism,

AS

DELIVERED by EUSEBIUS, &c.

WITH

Critical and Historical NOTES.

SHEWING, FIRST,

Its Origin, Progress, Decay and Revival,
thro' a misconstrued CHRISTIANITY.

AND, SECONDLY,

A *Phœnician* and *Egyptian* CHRONOLOGY,
from the first Man, down to the first
Olympiad, agreeable to the Scriptural
Accounts.

The Whole interspers'd with

REFLECTIONS on Superstition and Arbitrary Power, whereby a close and necessary *Connection* is discover'd between both, and a Right Notion of *True Religion* and *Civil Government* established.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the AUTHOR,

And Sold by M. COOPER, in *Pater-noster-Row*;
J. JOLIFFE, in *St. James's-Street*; and by the
Book-sellers of *London* and *Westminster*. 1743.

(Price 1s. 6d.)

THE

LIST OF

ANCIENT Papyri

DELIVERED BY

WITH

COPIES AND NOTES

SHEWING FIRST

THE ORDER, Progress, Decay and Revival

of the Egyptian Language

AND SECONDLY

A History and Chronology

of the first part, down to the first

of the second, according to the

Chronology

THE SECOND PART

RELATES TO THE HISTORY AND

PROGRESS OF THE

LANGUAGE FROM THE

FIRST PART OF THE

SECOND PART OF THE

TO THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE


OF THE

OF THE

OF THE



P R E F A C E.

 HIS Treatise breaking off more abruptly, p. 128. than was originally intended, and for which a Reason is there given, I should not have prefix'd a Preface to it, till it was more compleat, had I not met with a learned Gentleman who took the History here explain'd for a forged one, and adapted by me, for no other Purpose, than thence to take an Opportunity of delivering my Thoughts the more freely upon the mischievous Effects and Consequences of Superstition and arbitrary Government. It may therefore be necessary here, in as few Words as possible, to shew the Weakness and Absurdity of all such Suggestions.

We have observ'd in p. 100. of the following Treatise, that it was to the vast Influence of THOTH's Cosmogony over the World, we must ascribe the great Difficulty or moral Incapacity that Men who liv'd before Christ had of knowing and consequently believing in the true God: The several Monuments formerly erected in Germany and other Nations in Memory of * THOTH's, and the several Idols of this false Deity, of which some Remains are still to be seen in those Parts, are more than sufficient to remove all Suspicion of his only having an imaginary Existence.

Several Memoirs which have lately been collected and publish'd by learned and judicious Authors in Germany upon this Subject, abundantly demonstrate the Certainty of his Existence, as well as what his Principles were.

A 2

As

* THOTH was call'd in Egypt THOUTH and THOOR, and known under the Name of HERMES by the Greeks.

As to the following Fragment or History of SANCHONIATHO herewith publish'd (the great Subject and Text of the following Treatise) it is only, some few Observations of his own excepted, a Collection of THOTH's Memoirs. Some Authors of our Time, celebrated for their critical Learning and great Skill in oriental Languages, have indeed doubted of the Genuineness of this History, but as their Doubts proceeded from their being at a Loss how to understand it, and consequently utterly unable to apply its true Meaning to any useful Purpose, as we find Bishop CUMBERLAND by his profound Learning, peculiar Sagacity, and unwearied Application has since done, to the Satisfaction of all judicious and learned Men, there remains now among such, not the least Ground of Doubt of its being genuine.

To say as they did, that PHILO BIBLIUS, by pretending to translate it from the Greek, forg'd it himself, and PORPHIRY after him, made use of it to distress Christianity, such an Objection is of no Force, because made so long after the Age of EUSEBIUS, who liv'd at a Time, and in Circumstances that gave him the best Opportunities of searching and examining all the original Evidences for or against it, and who was so famous, not only for his great Compass of Learning and Knowledge, but also his critical Skill and Sagacity in distinguishing the genuine from the spurious Works of the ancient Writers, and who has preserved this valuable Fragment, by inserting it into his noble Work of the Preparatio Evangelica, which he would never have done, had he entertain'd the least Doubt or Suspicion concerning it.

His Design, to be sure, in doing so, was to remove a bad Notion, which, as here appears, PORPHIRY had been endeavouring to propagate of the Christian Religion; but how could that great Bishop attain such an End, by publishing a forg'd History? No more, I think, than the Enemies of his Religion could hurt it by contriving it.

P R E F A C E.

iv

I term it his Religion, because the Mifery of Iniquity being then in a greater Forwardnefs than when it began, 1 Thes. ii. 7. I humbly conceive it was more his, or that of the Clergy, I mean of that Time, than fuch as I have described true Chriftianity to be in the following Treatife.

Two Reasons chiefly, among many others, perfuade me to think fo; the 1st, because the Church, that is the Clergy (for now it was they began to appropriate to themselves, exclusive of the Laity, the Name of the Church) was become very rich and powerful, by getting an Emperor of their own Religion on their Side, and fo they soon became the Children of this World as much as the Pagans themselves had ever been; for here it was that properly began the Transition from the true and real to nominal Chriftianity, and fo could not but endeavour to outwit and excel them at their own Weapons, by turning the Edge of the Government against them to their Oppreffion, and at last their total Ruin and Destruction. Thus I conceive the Contention and Difpute was great and warm, but rather on the Account of Power and Riches, than pure Chriftianity or true Religion.

A second Reason is, that true Chriftianity can never beget of itself Strife or Diffention of any Kind. Its true Character in the Language of the ancient Prophets was Meeknefs and Abundance of Peace; according to the Doctrine of our Saviour and his Apostles, it was pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of good Works, without Partiality and Hypocrify. The Apostles indeed had some Differences among them, but if the Origin and Occasion of those Difputes be well confidered, it will clearly appear, that they rather proceeded from their Jewish Education, and Prejudices for ceremonial Laws, than from Chriftianity itself, whose chief, or rather only Design, is to make all Men wifer and better. And I am fo fully perfuaded of this, that I am fure, if it was preached in its primitive Purity and Simplicity, and

as

as it really is, by shewing that its true Character is to overcome Evil with Good, the greatest Barbarians in the World would be ready to embrace it as soon as made sensible of it, as on the contrary, no Barbarian whatever, or more civiliz'd Person, will ever entertain a favourable Notion of it, when he perceives, that it is only made a Snare to enslave him into a greater Subjection or harder Dependance upon human Authority, than he would be without it.

If I should be mistaken in the Truth of these two Reasons, and some other Cause of Dispute could be assign'd between the Pagans and Christians, it would be, I think, of great Importance to Christianity to know it.

This might easily be done, had we still the Books which PORPHIRY and EUSEBIUS wrote, the first against, and the second for Christianity, and therefore I cannot but equally lament their Loss, tho' it happen'd from different Reasons. Those of PORPHIRY were at the Instance of the Clergy burnt under THEODOSIUS the Great, and those of EUSEBIUS perish'd by a blind Zeal for Orthodoxy; for St. JEROME, who calls him the Chief of Arians, says, that of thirty he wrote against PORPHIRY, ten were lost in his Time, and I humbly conceive, if all those Books could have been answer'd to the Satisfaction of learned and judicious Men, none of them would have been lost, but all remain safe to this Time.

As to any Objection that may be made to the Reflections the Reader will find interspers'd upon Superstition and arbitrary Government, as if they had been better publish'd by themselves, than built upon an old History, even allowed to be true, I hope they will appear of Weight in themselves, and to arise naturally from the Subject. Right and just Notions of true Religion and civil Government, cannot be too frequently, nor improperly inculcated at any Time, they being the only true Foundation upon which the Principles of all Equity and Goodness stand firm. Is it not for want of such Principles

ples being really and firmly establish'd in the Hearts of Men, that all our publick Grievances flow, and that all the Measures of any Government justly complain'd of are so seldom redress'd? and how could such Principles so effectually get Admittance there, as when deduc'd from ancient Facts, in which no Person at this Time could have any particular Interest or Concern?

But as these Reflections, if they are well grounded, will besides serve as a general and sufficient Answer to all the Arguments of late brought against Christianity, and especially those resulting from a Treatise entitled, Christianity not founded on Arguments, I hope they may meet with proper Encouragement in a Christian Country, and under a civil Government, the best constituted of any now in the World, to promote true Liberty, and a free and impartial Enquiry after Truth.

This is all I think proper to say at present, except only to inform the Reader, that whatever Addition shall be made in any following Edition, shall be printed a-part for the Use of those who purchas'd the first, and also to desire him, that before he begins to read this Treatise, he be pleas'd to correct the following Errata.

THE

ERRATA.


Page 1. Line 10. for *Erastobenes*, read *Eratoſthenes*; p. 2. l. 4. after *Sanchoniatho*, add, or *Philo bis Translator and Countryman*; p. 6. l. 18. for, *rbis*, r. *bis*; p. 8. l. 17. for, of the *Truth*, r. and the *Truth*; p. 10. l. 13. after *acquired*, add, *an*; p. 34. l. 4. of the Note, for, *World may be diſſolved*, r. *great Globe itſelf ſhall diſſolve*; p. 38. l. 13. for, *Juſus*, r. *Jeſus*; p. 40. l. 2. at the Word * *Sun*, r. the following Note.

* I hope they had ſo good an Intent, who erected in a great Parochial Church here in Town, over the chief Place of Worſhip, the Image of the *Sun*, tho' the Name of God fixed in the Middle (not in *Hebrew*, but in *Popiſh Characters*) ſeems to contradict it: *Popiſh Characters*, I ſay, becauſe to be found no where but in the *Vulgate*; that is, the only authentrick Bible in the *Romiſh Church*.

p. 43. l. 10. for, *convince*, r. *conceive*; p. 50. l. 21. for, *bat- tled*, r. *baffled*; p. 57. l. 3. for, *great*, r. *general*; p. 65. l. 12. after *they*, add, *thought*; p. 66. l. 2. for, *obliges to*, r. *obliges on*; p. 69. l. 13. after *to*, add, *ibe*; p. 72. l. 7. for, *Miſery*, r. *Mercy*; p. 75. l. 22. for, *ſound*, r. *ſounds*; p. 84. l. 3. after *begin*, add, *there be*; p. 85. l. 9. for, *Thing*, r. *Being*; p. 90. l. 16. after *in*, add, *my*; p. 101. l. 14. for, *Tertullianus*, r. *Tertullian*; p. 108. l. 30. for, *Apoſtles*, r. *Apoſtle*; p. 110. l. 1. for *ſenſible*, r. *ſuſceptible*; p. 111. l. 15. after *even*, add, *natural*.



THE
HISTORY
OF
ANCIENT PAGANISM.

 HIS History is founded upon that which SANCHONIATHO had extracted out of the Memoirs of THOTH; and it is to EUSEBIUS that we are obliged for having preserved it, as likewise to an *English* Bishop for having cleared-up and continued it down to the *first Olympiad*. We shall see in the Sequel, how wonderfully the Canon of ERASTOTHENES served him as a Means of executing it to the Satisfaction of all judicious and learned Men; but first of all, we must apply ourselves wholly to give a just Idea of the *Phœnician* History by SANCHONIATHO, with which this famous Canon is found to have so close a Connection.

B

CHAP.



CHAP. I.

Which serves as an Introduction to the Phœnician History of SANCHONIATHO.

THIS History treats of a Subject-Matter consonant to that of the first Book of MOSES intituled *Genesis*, yet we do not find that SANCHONIATHO has given it the same Title: That of COSMOGONY, a *Greek* compounded Word, signifying the Generation of the World, seemed to him more agreeable to the Design of THOTH, on whose Memoirs his History is principally, or rather wholly grounded, inasmuch as, some few Things excepted, it is nothing more than a Translation he has made of it out of the *Phœnician* Tongue into the *Greek*.

The Difference of these two Titles seems to consist only in this, that MOSES's Title offers nothing at first to the Attention of the Reader, but the Generations of Men; whereas the other fixes it to the first Part of his History, which regards the Production of the Universe: However, as it is certain, that these two, the most ancient

Historians

Historians in the World, had very different Views in Writing, it appears to me reasonable enough to believe, that they had a Mind, by the Difference of their Titles, to express something of more Importance, than what we have first now remarked; and it is *this*:

The View of MOSES, guided at once by Reason and Revelation, was to bring all Men, by the Consideration of the Universe, to acknowledge an intelligent Being for the Author of it; to love him with all their Heart; to render that Worship which is due to him, not only as the first efficient Cause of all Things, but also as the only Source of all Good; whereas THOTH, who did not intend to acknowledge anything of this Kind, endeavours to make the Fabrick of this World be look'd upon as a Production purely natural, and to which nothing could have given a Being, or a Form, but some Circumstances falling out by Chance, and according to the general Course of Motion in the confused Materials, which, as he says, preceded it.

This is the Method he takes, not only to conceal from Men the Knowledge of the true God, but also to deprive them of the only Means capable of bringing them back to it, namely, the Consideration of

the Wonders of the World, since, if one can suppose it was produced of itself without any Interposition of a prior Being, and suffer oneself to be so persuaded from a Principle of Religion, as we shall find to have been the Case of the Disciples of THOTH; then 'tis in vain to consider the Universe, and observe all its Beauties; we are no more in a Condition capable to admit of any Thought strong enough to discover its Author, and to make a solemn Acknowledgment of him.

Strange as this Assertion may appear to those, who, not entering into the Force of such a Prejudice, don't think that one can ever be in such Circumstances, it is not therefore the less true: The Behaviour of the *Pagans*, with regard to their unknown God, is, as we shall see in the Course of our Remarks, a very convincing Proof of it.

Thus it is evident, that a Man educated in the Principles of THOTH, cannot any more, by considering the Wonders of the World, arrive at the Knowledge of its Author: That Author, I say, who yet most surely was prior to it, and who, being Self-existent, must be *sovereignly* perfect, and by Consequence the true God, which all the true faithful, and all reasonable

able Persons, have ever acknowledged and adored; but, towards whom, they would never any more have the least Thoughts, much less entertain an Affection for him, if they could once be persuaded to admit, as an Article of Faith, that tho' the World, in which, as they imagined, they contemplated him, was not his Work, nor his faithful or rational Creatures, the worthiest Inhabitants of it, the Subject of his paternal Care.

Here then would be a Diffolution of all the closest and most sacred Ties, by which every reasonable Man rejoices to see himself attached to his God: No longer any Consolation in this Life; no longer any inward Support of Mind; no longer any Motive of Confidence; no longer any Sentiments either of Religion, Equity, Benevolence or Sincerity: An End of all Taste for Order; an End of all Deference; an End of all Elevation of Soul; an End of all Virtues: Such are the *blessed* Consequences of Atheism!

But as this would not have answered the political Views of THOTH; besides, Man is so framed, as not to be able intirely to get quit of Sentiments so natural as those of Religion are; he finds out, in order to impose upon him a Means proper to

to satisfy him upon this Article, by establishing a Plan of Religion sufficiently capable to exercise the Devotion of his Subjects, and at the same Time facilitate his Plan of Government, which, doubtless, was arbitrary Power without Limitation; tho' still he was desirous to make it supportable, by affecting to reign agreeably to the pretendedly revealed Will of the Gods after his own Invention.

Two Reasons lead me to think, that it was not very difficult for him to establish his Plan of Religion; the first is, that this Plan, as we shall see in the Sequel, was not altogether new: All he had to do, was only to polish and render it more mysterious. The second is, as I apprehend, that this manner of Thinking with regard to Sentiments of Religion, had a great Resemblance with that, by which Musick operates upon Persons, whose Principles of Religion are different.

When a good Protestant, or rather a good Christian, such as he is, who makes use of revealed Religion to rectify Errors which might induce him to act contrary to natural Religion, and the Principles of Humanity: When such a Man, I say, hears an Air of Musick which touches him, he feels his Soul penetrated with religious

ligious Sentiments, which have Reference directly to God, as his only Object of Praise and Love, and indirectly to his Neighbour, to whose Good he should be sincerely willing to contribute, and whom he professes to treat as he would be treated by him; that is to say, with much Humanity and Condescension: But let us suppose him to be an ancient Idolater, or some other whose Sentiments of Religion are formed upon the Ideas of modern Rome, the same Air, or the same Hymn that shall have stirred up such good Emotions in the holy and reasonable Man, will not fail to stir up in this Person, such as shall be no less opposite than the Principles of his Religion are to the other's Principle: His Principle, I say, to shew that the true Christian has no more than one, namely, the Father, or the Principle of all Things, whereas the others, treading blindly in the Footsteps of THOTH's Disciples, have as many as their Priests have need of inventing, in order to preserve their Credit, to maintain the Authority of doing good, or harm, to whom they please, and to live in Plenty and Splendour.

But, not to lose the Chain of Reasoning, which THOTH, as it seems to me, made the Rule of his Conduct, in establishing

blishing his System of Religion, I say, that, as Musick works Emotions in the Heart of every one, conformable to the Idea which he has of his Religion, in the same Manner this Religion, whatever it be, provided that the Object, or Objects of Adoration which it presents to Men, appear sovereignly great, and as the only Beings from whom they believe that they either can or ought to expect their Happiness: This Religion, I say, is sufficient to fix the Inclination which they feel for Religion in general: The Prejudices which every one retains in Favour of that wherein he was brought up, and which is so difficult to root out, is a very convincing Proof of the Reasonableness of the Truth of this Assertion.

This Idea then of Sovereignty, which cannot be separated from the Objects we adore upon a Principle of Religion, till we are convinced of the contrary, appearing but very faintly in that Kind of Religion which THOTH had received from his Ancestors, put him upon thinking of a Method to render it more perfect: And, in Effect, as this Religion, which consisted only in exterior Acts of Piety, exercised at first towards Plants, which they consecrated and esteemed as Gods, and afterwards towards Men, whose Memory they endeavour'd

endeavour'd to honour in Acknowledgment of some useful Discoveries they had made *for Life*; as, I say, this Religion offer'd nothing to their Consideration, but Objects of Humanity, and such in Consequence as would inspire them with nothing more than Sentiments of Humanity and Benevolence for one another, which was by no Means proper to introduce the Spirit of Slavery, without which it was impossible for him to establish that arbitrary Government he was desirous to subject them to, it was necessary that to these simple and ordinary Objects of Devotion, he should add others which might appear more mysterious, and more worthy of their Adoration.

The Stars and Elements were what he chose to be look'd upon as so many Deities, and for this Reason it was, that he ascribed to them, not only a perfect Knowledge of Things on Earth, as well as in Heaven; but likewise a Capacity of producing, and directing them to the Advantage of those, who should pay to those imaginary Deities, the Worship which he would have to be due to them. Nothing more was wanting to bring the People to his Design, than to make them observe the Order and Uniformity with which these heavenly Objects regulate their Mo-
C
tions,

tions, seeming as it were wholly intent upon relieving one another, as well to shed upon the Earth that Influence which is peculiar to them, as to watch over the Welfare of its Inhabitants.

From these Observations which arise very naturally, and are within the Reach of all the World, THOTH was too much a Politician not to draw Consequences suitable to his Views, by supposing the Stars had a Principle of Activity, and other Perfections inherent in themselves, in Virtue of which they had acquired universal Superiority, on which Superiority he founded their Right to the Worship he had design'd for them: And in order to give an Air of more Respect to such a Supposition, and at the same Time to make all the wise and thinking Men, who might be disposed to raise Objections, pass for impious or incredulous, he does not omit to wrap it up in a Sort of Revelation, according to which he undertakes to make known the Original of those new Objects of Adoration, by explaining how they had been form'd, and by what Degrees they, as he assured, were arriv'd to be the sovereign Inspectors of the Heavens and the Earth.

There are many Additions and Remarks to be made on what I have been saying, but

but as the *Cosmogony* of *THOTH* is the principal Foundation on which I must build every-thing, and justify at the same Time whatever I have already advanced, it is requisite first, that I should lay it open to the Consideration of the Reader: Thus it follows, as it is to be found in the first Book of *EUSEBIUS's Evangelical Preparation*.

The COSMOGONY translated out of EUSEBIUS's Preparat. Evangel. lib. 1. chap. 10.

“ He (*THOTH*) supposeth, or affirms,
 “ that the Principle of the Universe was
 “ a dark and windy Air, or a Wind made
 “ of dark Air, and a turbulent Evening
 “ *Chaos*; and that these Things were
 “ boundless, and for a long Time had no
 “ Shape or Figure: But when the Wind
 “ fell in Love with his own Principles,
 “ and a Mixture was made, that Mixture
 “ was call'd *DESIRE* or *CUPID* (*Ἔρως*).

“ This Mixture compleated, was the
 “ Beginning of the making (*κτίσις*) of
 “ all Things. But that Wind did not
 “ know its own Production; and of this,
 “ with that Wind, was begotten *MOT*,
 “ which some call *Mud*, others the Putre-
 “ faction of a watery Mixture: And of

“ this came all the Seed of this Building,
 “ and the Generation of the Universe.

“ But there were certain Animals which
 “ had no Sense, out of which were be-
 “ gotten intelligent Animals, and were
 “ call'd ZOPHESEMIN, that is to say, the
 “ Spies, or Overseers of Heaven, and were
 “ formed alike in the Shape of an Egg :
 “ Thus *shone* out MOR, the Sun, and the
 “ Moon, the less and the greater Stars.

“ Such (addeth EUSEBIUS) is the *Phæni-*
 “ *cian* Cosmogony, directly leading to *A-*
 “ *theism*. Now let us see how he affirms
 “ the Generation of Animals to be produ-
 “ ced and subsist : He says therefore ;

“ And the Air shining thoroughly with
 “ Light, by its fiery Influence on the Sea
 “ and Earth, Winds were begotten, and
 “ Clouds, and great Descents of the hea-
 “ venly Waters. And when all these
 “ Things first were separated from their
 “ proper Place by the Heat of the Sun,
 “ and then all met again in the Air, and
 “ dashed against one another, and so
 “ were broken to Pieces ; whence Thunders
 “ and Lightnings were made : And at the
 “ Stroke of these Thunders, the afore-
 “ mentioned intelligent Animals were a-
 “ wakened, and frightened with the Sound,
 “ and

“ and Male and Female moved in the
 “ Earth, and in the Sea: This is their
 “ Generation of Animals.

“ After these Things our Author (SAN-
 “ CHONIATHO) goes on saying: These
 “ Things are written in the *Cosmogony* of
 “ THOTH, and in his Memoirs; and from
 “ the Reasonings, Conjectures, and natu-
 “ ral Signs which his Mind saw and dis-
 “ cover'd, he has enlightened us.

“ Afterwards declaring the Names of
 “ the Winds, *North, South*, and the rest,
 “ he makes this *Epilogue*.

“ But the first Men consecrated the
 “ Plants that sprung out of the Earth,
 “ and judg'd them Gods, and worshipp'd
 “ them, upon whom they themselves liv'd
 “ and all their Posterity, and all before
 “ them; to these they made their Meat
 “ and Drink Offerings.

“ Then he concludes: These are the
 “ Devices of Worship agreeing with the
 “ Weakness and Want of Boldness in their
 “ Minds. ”



CHAP. II.

Containing general and critical REMARKS
upon the COSMOGONY.

THOTH, by the Acknowledgment of SANCHONIATHO, was the Author of this *Cosmogony*; and as he was not only one of the greatest Philosophers that Antiquity has produced, exclusive of the Church of GOD, but likewise absolute Monarch of all *Egypt*, and in this Capacity, if not High-Priest, at least Moderator (*Regens*) of the Religion of the State, there is no doubt but he took Care the Religion delineated in the *Cosmogony*, should be the established Religion of his Kingdom.

And, indeed, as we see that the Works which are made publick under the Authority of Persons of such a Character, never fail of having some relation to the Ends for which they are ordain'd; so his *Cosmogony*, placed at the Head of the History of the Antiquities of his Ancestors Religion, altho' embellish'd and improved, gives us room to think, that this Religion was really grown conformable to his Ideas;

Ideas; and we have the more Reason to be persuaded of it, as we learn from the Epilogue annex'd to the *Cosmogony*, that the first Men began their Religion by a pious Respect of, and formal Acts of Devotion towards the Plants their Food, that grow out of the Ground, as their most immediate Benefactors in the Support of their Lives; and it may be observ'd by the Way, that it is to this that JUVENAL refers:

*O sanctas Gentes quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis
Numina!*

*O blessed Peopl, whose Gods in their Gardens
grow!*

But it is certain, that this Religion did not remain confin'd within such narrow Bounds, since by comparing this Epilogue with another Place of the aforementioned first Book of EUSEBIUS, chap. ix. pag. 28. Paris Edition [which I shall always follow, as being the most correct] we find that it was extended to other Objects. Thus it runs Word for Word: "The Phœnicians contented themselves at first with the
" Adoration of Plants, which Plants, in
" Process of Time, they consecrated to
" the Sun, Moon, and other such like
" Parts of the Universe, which became
" their

“ their known Gods. ” But for the better understanding the Circumstances of this Novelty, it is proper to remark, that we are not therefore to think the Worship of Plants, and of their other Deities of an inferior Rank, were intirely neglected or forgot; but only that, on certain solemn Days, they omitted the Commemoration of 'em, by Reason the Publick Worship was then wholly dedicated to their greatest Gods, in order to do them more Honour *.

As to the one only sovereign and truly divine Being, whether they took any Notice of him at the same Time that they honoured the others with a publick and solemn Worship, we shall examine in a Chapter a Part, that we may not interrupt our general Remarks upon the *Cosmogony*.

I have call'd the Origin, which THOTH attributes to his Deities, a Sort of Revelation, as it has nothing in itself which agrees with that Idea of a first Principle, which Reason naturally annexes to what we call GOD, and whom it dictates to us to Honour as such. If that Origin had such an Agreement, I should be ready to call it a true and well-grounded Revelation,

* Just so it is done in the Church of *Rome*.

tion, or at least an incontestable Principle of Natural Religion, according to which, we know whether a Doctrine, reveal'd, *cometh from the Father or not*, Joh. vii. 17.

It is with great Satisfaction, I own, that I see my Observation so well supported by the Passage just now cited, since it shews that the Essence of Christianity consists in the re-establishing of Natural Religion. I might alledge several others to evidence that this was our Saviour's Design for coming into the World; but I shall content myself with this for the present, because it shews to us more particularly the Ways which we have within ourselves to make us certain, that none but this Religion can be the true *one*.

However, I ought not to conceal from my Reader, that I have heard a great Preacher endeavour in a Discourse intended for that Purpose, to elude the Sense of this Passage so clear of itself, and to force another upon it, which is just the Reverse: But, as he could not do it well enough to convince his illustrious Auditory, and has besides laid open, in another Discourse, Principles whereby he shew'd himself possess'd with the Spirit of Party, there is but little Occasion, I think, to spend Time in confuting him: It may suffice

D

fice to shew by what Means he made himself so well known.

The Conduct, or the Genius of one Part of the Church, goes, as 'tis well known, by the Name of *Priestcraft*: The only proper Way to remove the Sting of this Denomination, would be to change the Conduct which was the Occasion of it, and to follow another more conformable to the Rules of Christianity and Reason; but as this is hard to corrupt Minds, and not possible for those of that Party to keep up otherwise the Respect which they pretend to be their Due, and whereof they are so jealous, they endeavour to remove this Inconveniency, either by preaching up the Worth of external Forms of Religion, which are insignificant, or the *Belief of Mysteries*, which serves only to keep the People in Blindness, and to hinder them from embracing what is good and reasonable of itself. Now, as such Artifices cannot take effect, but in the Minds of ignorant People, or of those whose Interest it is to maintain them, it happens that these Conductors of the Blind draw upon themselves the Scorn of the more Knowing and Intelligent, and that Accusation being too well grounded, cannot be answered, but to the Confusion of those who undertake it; and yet this was That our Preacher
would

would do on this Occasion. The Method he took was to add to this Accusation another, by saying in the Way of Sneere, *Priest's-craft, King's-craft.*

The obvious Intent of these two different Things, in a civil Government, so maliciously connected, in order that the Sharpness of his Sarcasm might strike the quicker, was first to cast an odious Look on all those who profess not to believe blindly the System of his Party; and, secondly, to raise thereby a general Alarm against them; since, if the first Accusation could be true, the second, indirectly made, would be so likewise; and of Course in making Allusion to a like proverbial Saying, formerly much us'd by the common People of the same Party, *viz. No Church no King*, it follows, that the pretended absolute Authority of *Priest* and *King* must nearly stand or fall together; which, I think, would be a Wish soon to be fulfilled, if what this Preacher indirectly applies to Monarchs, might be as true as to their Way of governing, as there is Reason to think of the Clergy in general, with respect to Religion.

A farther Result of this is, if there be any, who, till now, have been sincerely persuaded of the Uprightness of all the

Priests, and the Innocency of their Conduct; such a Way of Preaching the Gospel is, I think, very fit to make them doubt of it, and at the same Time to confirm those who question'd it in their Opinion.

But to remind my Reader of the Intent of my Observation, according to which it is obvious, that we have within ourselves the Faculty of knowing, that all Revelation, which, like that of THOTH, does not agree with the Acknowledgment of a first Principle; that is to say, with the Glory of GOD, and the Happiness of Men, can never be a proper Ground to found the true Religion upon. And this Remark was, I think, the more necessary to be made, that I know of no Religion in the World which does not support itself by some Revelation, except it be that of the true Philosophers, which is Natural Religion. To this they adhere as the only one that can be agreeable to GOD, and to which true divine Revelation can never be contrary, tho' capable of contributing much to its Perfection, whether by rectifying distant Consequences perversely drawn by the different Prejudices of every Nation, or by adding Motives proper to lead Men to the Practice of it.

To

To be convinc'd that the first Principles of the Religion of THOTH are opposite to Natural Religion, as well as divine Revelation, 'tis sufficient to observe in what Manner, as he tells us, the *Zopbesemin* (thus he calls the *Stars*, which he gives for Objects of Adoration of the first Class) began. He sets them forth as intelligent Animals, and says, that they were begotten by others, who themselves had no Sensation; and the first Form in which they appeared, was that of an Egg; and it is after this Manner, as he plainly tells us, that *Mud*, the *Sun*, and *Moon*, the great and little *Stars*, came to shine, and had the Faculty of knowing all Things, as well as proceeding in their Functions of Super-intendants of the Skies; which Functions were annex'd to that high Degree of Divinity, to which he supposes that they had in Time arriv'd, by becoming at length perfect Intelligences (*noepa*); and it is upon this supreme Degree that he founds the Right of the *Zopbesemin* to the most solemn Worship which he orders to be paid to them; whereas the Animals without Sensation, by which the Plants are to be understood, were not to be honoured, but by a simple Form of Worship; as the midling Worship was design'd for the sensitive Animals, as being arriv'd to a Degree

gree which hold a Medium between that of the Plants, and of these *Zophesemin*.

Here then is enough, in my Opinion, to let us see, that THOTH's Religion is by no Means grounded upon Principles which can agree with those of Natural Religion, since it is evident, that they are opposite to the Idea of a first Cause, which we naturally conceive to be a Spirit, or at least as a Being infinitely wise, sole Author and Governor of the Universe, and to adore whom, exclusively of every other Being, true Religion calls upon all reasonable Creatures: It is true, indeed, that in the Beginning of his *Cosmogony*, he speaks of a Wind, as having the same Virtue as is attributed to the Spirit moving upon the Waters, *Gen. i. 2.* and he does it in such a manner, as would make one believe, that he look'd upon its great Influence in the Formation of the World, as a first Cause; but whereas it appears by his Manner of Speaking of it, that this first Cause was blind, and acted without any Design, and in Conjunction with another besides, call'd the *turbulent Chaos of Night*, which was neither less stupid, nor more clear-sighted than his Associate, it must necessarily be supposed, that this Cause could not be the first, and that it was preceded and directed by another, which possesses, in his
own

own Right, all the Qualities essential to that Being which we call GOD, and without which we cannot conceive that such a Being can be GOD, the only and sovereignly to be respected Author of all Things.

Now, as THOTH does not go so high, and as the most elevated Objects of Adoration, which he proposes, terminate in his *Zophesemin*, which he makes posterior to the blind Action of his first Principles, it follows, that he has mis'd the true Foundation of Religion, and that his System is absurd.

However, it must be own'd, that, if one could be persuaded that Matter were capable of thinking, as I find that several Persons now-a-days imagine, asserting, as the *Sadduces* did, that there are no Spirits, and that every-thing in the World is meer Matter, one should be oblig'd to entertain a more favourable Opinion of THOTH's System, seeing there would result from it a physical Connection in all the Parts of the Universe, which would serve to explain, more clearly than any other has done hitherto, the Relation which Things and their Effects have with their Cause.

SECTION

SECTION I.

To shew how far the Faculty of Thinking, ascribed to Matter by the Egyptians, may agree with true Philosophy.

It is certain, from the Confession of the *Egyptians*, that their Religion was founded upon the System which they had received from THOTH, in its utmost Perfection; and that the subtle Matter was there look'd upon as a Cause of itself intelligent, and from whence the other Beings, to whom she was pleas'd to communicate herself, receiv'd the Faculty of thinking and acting with Understanding: To be convinced of it, we need only to consult EUSEBIUS; who, supported by the Testimonies of MANETHO, DIODORUS SECVLUS, CHOEREMON, &c. proves, in his third Book, that the *Egyptians*, who were become better Disciples of THOTH than the Phœnicians, his Countrymen (since it's well known that his Doctrine was received by, and more generally approved of, those, than it had been by these; who adhering to the Simplicity of the Religion of their Ancestors, preferr'd it to the Embelishments and Additions which the *Egyptians* had made therein, and from whence arose an irreconcilable Hatred between the two Nations,

ons, whose dismal and mournful Consequences appear in the Course of this History) EUSEBIUS, I say, proves very clearly, that the *Egyptians* were confident, that the subtle Matter, being in great Plenty within the Stars, rendered them intelligent to the highest Degree, and consequently worthy of an absolute and unlimited Adoration; and that the same Matter residing in their Plants, their Beasts, and their holy Men, and being there intelligent, and disposed in its Nature to contribute by its Influence to the Welfare and Preservation of human Kind, made them fit to partake of the same Adoration as that which was given to the Stars, or, as they are call'd, the *Zophesemin*, the only Difference consisting in the Manner more or less solemn.

These are Testimonies which give a just Idea enough, tho' a very concise one, of the Religion which was established in *Egypt*, under the Reign of THOTH. If it cannot be said, that the subtle Matter could be considered as a first Principle in his System (since it appears on the contrary, that after having had a very ample Knowledge of it, he had voluntarily given it up, without retaining any thing of it but faint Images, of which he compos'd his false Religion, the only Basis by which it is possible with any Shadow of Justice

E

to

to support any arbitrary Government) if, I say, it cannot be prov'd by these Testimonies, that the subtle Matter pass for a first Principle in his System, at least it cannot be deny'd, but that he attributed to it a Faculty of thinking, and by that means gave room to more clear-sighted Persons, not only to condemn in their Minds as false Divinities the different Objects of Adoration which he had the Cunning to make the People approve of, as true, but likewise to make 'em look upon the subtle Matter as the first Principle of all Things.

The wisest *Egyptians*, to be sure, regulated their Sentiments of Religion according to this Notion; and I have even Reason to believe, that when Decency, or any other more pressing Occasion, obliged them to go to the Temples, and there be Spectators of the Worship appointed for false Objects of Adoration, they did not fail to apply in their Hearts the Worship to him whom they believ'd to be the first Principle, and by this means endeavour'd to remedy the Defects, which shock'd them the most in the Religion of the State.

And of this we ought so much the more to be persuaded, inasmuch as (for we have

have it from good Hands) it is thus, agreeable to the Notion of a famous Bishop, that all Persons in *France*, who pretend to good Sense, actually behave, in hopes to clear themselves thereby from the just Reproaches, which they cannot but feel in their Conscience, for approving, by an outward Conformity, a Religion, which favours more of *Paganism* than Christianity, tho' it bears the Name.

Thus, according to this Idea, it would be necessary, in order to make this System more perfect, more connected, and more conformable, at least in Appearance, to the Principles of Philosophy; it would be necessary, I say, to consider the subtle Matter, as the first intelligent Cause, and by the Influence of which, all Things should have become what they are, and, in a Word, as having all the Qualities essential to the sovereign Being which is the only God we ought to adore.

It would be an easy Matter, by the Help of such a Supposition, to understand literally this Passage of the *Acts* xvii. 28. where it is said, *That we live, move, and have our Being in God*; neither would it be more difficult to conceive the Immortality of the Soul, since, according to this System, it would be like a Portion of the sub-

the Matter, which in itself is not liable to any Change, and there would be room to hope, contrary to the Opinion of the *Sadduces*, who differ infinitely in this from the *Egyptians*, a future Life more happy than this present, seeing this better Part of ourselves a suppos'd Portion of the subtle Matter *, coming to be disengag'd, by what we call Death, from that which is gross, and which by its strict Union with our Soul, creates to it so much Disorder and Inconvenience, would enter again into its first natural State, which being a State of perfect Purity, would no longer suffer any thing which could give it Uneasiness, or occasion any Disquiet; and would, on the contrary, by a more perfect Union with God, its first Principle, enjoy a Happiness which nothing would be capable of troubling.

We have now seen how far THOTH and the *Egyptians* attributed the Faculty of thinking to Matter, and what Advantage would from thence arise to Philosophy if this Opinion was true, and known to be so; and, as without that all that we have said about it, would be useless, the most important Thing we have to do at present, is to examine the Reasons which may determine

* Divinz particulam aurz.

HOR.

termine us, either for rejecting this Opinion as false, or admit it as true.

SECTION II.

Wherein the Arguments for rejecting or admitting the Opinion of Matter being capable of Thought, are examin'd and answer'd.

As to those Arguments which induce us to deny Matter any Capacity of thinking, they are drawn from the Impossibility of conceiving that it can think; and in order to demonstrate that we should be in the wrong even to imagine it possible, recourse is had to Revelation; and this is the Method they take to employ it to their Advantage, and shew at the same time, that in this respect it is consonant to Reason.

Revelation, by saying that God is a Spirit, and that we are created after his Image (signifying thereby that the Resemblance which it allows of between him and us, can only relate to the Nature of our Souls) says nothing contrary to our natural Ideas, seeing that there are not fewer Philosophers than Divines, who hold the Souls to be Substances intirely spiritual and without Extension; by which means, according to St. *Austin*, they differ essentially

essentially from Bodies; for, as this Father says in his Book *De Quantitate Animæ*, “ If Bodies could be without Extension, which consists in Length, Breadth and Depth, how could they be felt, or we be persuaded in good Earnest, that they were Bodies. Take away, says he, somewhere else, Space (meaning Extension) from Bodies, and they will be nowhere, and if they are nowhere, they will not be at all. ”

Now then, if the Faculty of thinking can only be the Property of a Substance spiritual or simple in its Nature, since the Essence of the Spirit consists in thinking, as that of the Body in Extension, it follows, that we must not only reject as absurd, the Opinion which attributes that Faculty to a Subject, which falls under the Senses, as we see the *Sun* does, which however is formed of the most subtle Matter that can be imagin'd; but, farther, we must look upon the Religion as idolatrous and injurious to God, that is founded upon such a Principle.

I cannot, I own, help granting, that the Objection is very strong, and that the Conclusion drawn from it, is just, since it is founded upon the Absurdity, it would follow by supposing, that the first Principle

ple were to be taken for a compounded Being, and capable of falling under the Cognizance of our Senses.

But if the Faculty of thinking is not really attributed to such a Sort of Matter, but only to Matter in general, that is to say, to a Being simple in its Nature, and which is liable to none of those gross or sensible Qualities in which St. *Austin* makes the Essence of Bodies consist, it will be found, that it is wrong to conclude any thing from thence to the Prejudice of this Opinion, as if it was ridiculous; since, as the first Principle is a Being infinite of itself, and of which we can conceive nothing clearly, but the Qualities or Attributes of a Creator, the only ones by which we can have any Relation to, or Connection with him; it follows, that whatever we assert of that sovereign Being, beyond the Bounds of this Connection, can be of no weight.

Since then we are assured, that the Objection makes nothing against the Opinion which attributes the Faculty of thinking to Matter in general, what can hinder us from defending it, as agreeable to Truth? And to shew immediately how little I doubt of it, I maintain, that, if the *Egyptians* had stopt at their true Principle, which

which is, as Philosophers do, to look upon the subtle Matter as the first and the only intelligent and active Cause, and that they had not made a wrong Application of it, by attributing to sensible Objects a Worship which is due to God only, inasmuch, as he is the first and only Cause, it would not be difficult to shew, that the fundamental Article of their Religion is agreeable to that which both Reason and Revelation present to us, and that consequently it is not in itself injurious to God.

But what (says some-body) is it not doing an Injury to God, to say, that he is a Substance, to which it is ridiculous to attribute the Faculty of thinking? It is so, most certainly; but it is no less certain, that this is an Objection that does not come to the Point, since those who start this Difficulty, understand no more by a subtle Matter, than a Matter gross and sensible, which they divide in their own Fancy, *ad infinitum*, and to which we conceive, as well as they, that it is ridiculous to attribute the Faculty of thinking; whereas this was far from being the Notion of the *Egyptians*, and many Philosophers after them, who understand by subtle or first Matter, *materia prima*, as some term it, a Substance simple in its Nature, subsisting

subsisting of itself, and without which, it is impossible to conceive how all other Substances, which are every one of 'em compounded, could have a Being, or at least be what they are, whether in respect of the Order to be observed within themselves, or with regard to that whereby the Relation of one to another is kept up to make one whole of the intire Universe.

Now, as this Order is found to be just, regular and constant, it follows, that this Substance, simple in its Nature, and consequently incapable of falling under the Senses, is a Cause in itself intelligent, and has in its own Right all the Qualities essential to the sovereign Being which we call God.

SECTION III.

Shewing how far the Christian Notion of GOD, agrees with the Egyptian.

Such, as we have seen, is the Idea of a first Cause, which the Philosophers seem to me to have formed upon that of the most knowing and intelligent among the *Egyptians*; and such is likewise that which *Jesus Christ* himself gives us, when he represents it under the Name of the Father, and tells us, that this first Cause of all Things is a Spirit. Now by this Expression,

tion, must necessarily be understood, ei-
 ther a Substance simple in its Nature, such
 as that I have been describing, or an es-
 sential Property resulting therefrom. I
 know of no Medium between these two
 Things, and chuse which ever you please,
 you cannot avoid concluding, that the
 Foundation of the *Egyptian* Religion is
 in no wise different from ours. If you
 take the first, it will follow, that to be
 a Spirit and God, is to be a Substance
 simple in its Nature; that alone being sui-
 table to God, consider'd as the first Cause;
 and further, as we cannot help supposing
 but that to be God, is to be something.
 If you determine in Favour of the other,
 I conceive there is as much Difference be-
 tween being a Spirit and divine Substance,
 as between a finite Substance, and the
 Form which results from it: And that to
 be a Spirit in this Sense, is saying that
 the Father, or first Cause of all Things is
 an intelligent Substance; or to explain
 myself still more distinctly, it is attribu-
 ting to the infinite Substance a Property,
 which is as natural to it, as it is to a finite
 Substance to have a Form. *

This latter Sense appears to me to be
 the true one, in that it is more agreeable

* If this philosophical Notion be true, I conceive we may,
 in a physical Way, determine in what consists the most es-
 sential Difference between the infinite Being, and a finite
 one; and farther, how the World may be dissolved, and, like
 the baseless Fabrick of a Vision, leave not a Wreck behind.

to the Intention of *Jesus Christ*, whose Design not being so much to let us know what God is in himself, as what he is with relation to us: He contents himself by calling him a Spirit, to give us an Idea of him, sufficient to prevent us from imagining that he can be of such a Nature as to fall under our Senses, or that any Thing which we see in the Universe, however admirable, can be him, or ought to be look'd upon otherwise than as the outward Testimonies of the Greatness of the Wisdom, and of the Goodness of this sovereign Being, which, join'd to those which we have of him within ourselves, should serve to excite in us towards him Sentiments of Admiration, Love and Confidence; Sentiments, which we ought to make manifest by real Acts of Benevolence and Compassion, not to him, who is perfectly happy in himself, but to all those our Fellow Creatures who stand in need of 'em: And this is what we ought to do so much the more willingly, as we know that he loves all Men in such a Manner, that he takes, as done to himself, the Assistance, and all other Marks of Good-will, which we shew them for the Love of him; and as we cannot have the Character of the Disciples of his Son, but in proportion as we love one another.

This is the very Purport of the Declaration which our Divine Master came into

the World to reveal to us at the Time appointed; to let us know, that the Father being the God of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews, he would make but one People of both, and for ever banish all Grounds of Divisions among Men.

Now, as the different Kinds of Worship establish'd in the World, and especially that of the Jews, which had the best Authority, and of which they were so manifestly tenacious, were sufficient to obstruct so natural and so reasonable an Union as this was; it follows, in the *first* Place, that this Obstacle should necessarily be removed, which is, in Effect, done by this Declaration, namely, That God is a Spirit, and that those who worship him, ought to do it in Spirit and Truth.

2dly, And, for the same Reason that we are to regard, as the Pest and Bane of human Society, all those who either invent, or support Inventions, fit only to force into a Separation from 'em, on mere Account of Religion, Persons who sincerely profess to worship the Father in Spirit and Truth. This is the Point wherein our general Union is center'd, and the only essential Article of our Faith; the Declaration of which alone having determined the Jews to take away our Saviour's Life, ought to be likewise

wise the only Ground of our publick Acknowledgments towards him. This then must alone be esteem'd the sole *Fundamental*, the Belief of which being sincere and well understood, makes us true Christians, and the only One, by Consequence, that we can believe in Sincerity, and understand with Advantage.

This is the only Belief capable of setting Men at a less Distance from one another, and of putting them in Possession of all the Advantages foretold by the Prophets, and by them fix'd to the Time of the Coming of the *Messiah*.

What could at present delay the Completion of their Predictions, but a wrong Idea which every one has form'd of his Religion? And how can this Idea be better rectified than by wholly adhering to the Principle which serves for a Foundation to the whole System of our Religion.

Now this Principle being the same with that of natural Religion, it follows, *first*, That there is no Person in the World who can, in Conscience, refuse to receive it as a Rule to which it is just and reasonable to conform our Sentiments of Religion; and as Philosophers, and all other reasonable *Pagans*, as it will appear in another Place, have been obliged to acknowledge the Reason-

sonableness of this fundamental Truth, and submit to it; it follows,

2dly, That all the Difficulty which opposes our Union, and consequently the general Happiness of all Men, is found on the Part of the * *Jews*, who cannot possibly renounce the External and Ceremonial Worship, by which they profess to expect the *Messiah*, as long as they prefer their Revelation to this incontestable Principle of natural Religion; which being hereby restored in all its Purity, as we see it was by *Jesus Christ*, is the only one that can render us agreeable to God, and make us live peaceably and comfortably in this World.

All these Consequences are so evident, and tend so naturally to render all Men free, reasonable and happy, by disposing them to act one with another, upon Principles of Love and Equity, that it is no Wonder that THOTH should be sensible of them; and that perceiving how incompatible they were with the arbitrary Government which he had a mind to establish, he should recede from the Principle on which they are grounded, and quit Natural Religion to establish another more suitable to his

* I might have added, and of all others like them, who, notwithstanding their Profession of the *Messiah's* being come, they make (in Spite of his Doctrine, which is, to worship the Father in Spirit and Truth) Religion merely to consist in Ordinances after the Commandments of Men. See *Colossians*, Chap. ii.

his Views, which could not be done otherwise, at least in a plausible Manner, than by making that Principle of all Things to be no longer look'd upon as a Cause simple, absolute and indivisible in its Nature, but as a Substance supposed in itself inapt for any thing whatsoever, and nevertheless had divided itself into many different absolute Beings, to which it had communicated all the Independence which we acknowledge to be in God, and had made them all equally Gods, tho' distinguish'd one from another by particular Influences, Virtues and Perfections.

Thus THOTH, like an able Politician, disfigur'd Natural Religion, by introducing Notions which serv'd for a Foundation to *Paganism*; and would to God that some such great Men, who call themselves Christians, had not, with the like Views, disfigur'd the same Religion which *Jesus Christ* had re-established, by adopting into it other Absurdities still more unworthy of the true God, and more pernicious to Mankind than those of *Ancient Paganism*.

But not to lose the Thread of my History, by stopping to make Reflections, which most considerate Persons will make of their own Accord, it is sufficient for me to have observ'd, that there were two Sorts of Religion in Egypt; one that was retain'd
by

by reasonable People, at least indirectly, who look'd upon the *Sun*, and the other Wonders of the Creation, as faint Images of the Wisdom and infinite Perfections of God, to whom alone they referr'd all the Praises and Sentiments of Adoration, which they could not forbear entertaining of him in their Hearts: The other was the common People's, who suffering themselves to be conducted blindly by their Priests, were wholly taken up with the exterior Divinity of that Luminary, holding it jointly with the others, as being the only Object of the publick Worship as by Law establish'd.

Thus we must look upon these to be the only Orthodox of those Times, since, as the Stars pass'd for the true *Zophesemin*, they, and not an imaginary Being, according to their Religion, were to be worshipped only; happily for the others, who were so reasonable as to attribute the Faculty of Thinking to the only Substance simple in its Nature, and such as we have been describing, these Orthodox had less Zeal, or more Humanity than those of our Age, otherwise they would have exterminated all who had not had the Complaisance to be Hypocrites, or embrace with all their Heart, and with all their Mind, the same Idolatry which was the Religion of the State.

Such

Such was the prevailing Religion of the Egyptians, and tho' it might have given room to the more considerate among them, to look upon it as false and injurious to the true God; nevertheless, we find, that the People believ'd in Conscience, that Matter which fell under the Cognizance of the Senses, was capable to think and govern the World; or, rather, without troubling themselves with these Speculations, they were inclin'd sooner to worship Gods without Number, than not to acknowledge any at all: And their Kings, who succeeded THOTH, seeing that, upon such Principles, the only Principles of Superstition, they might make Gods of their Ancestors, nay, make themselves to be look'd upon as such, were not wanting to authorize this popular Superstition; and much more, as they judg'd it proper for rivetting these monstrous Notions in the Minds of their Subjects, whereby they were taught to consider them as their absolute Masters, and to whom they owed a blind Obedience, even when they were convinc'd that they had no Principles of Love or Benevolence towards them, and that they ruled without any Appearance of Prudence, Tenderness and Equity. In this Manner, I say, THOTH abus'd the Disposition that his Subjects had for Religion in general;

and he brought it about to make 'em Bigots, without making it possible for them to be more holy, nor consequently enlightned, or more rational, there being no true Holiness, but what is join'd with, or proceeds from a Principle of Reason.

SECTION IV.

THOTH's System examin'd, shewing how far it agrees or disagrees with the Principles of natural and moral Philosophy.

Such are the natural Consequences of his System; a System, however, which, as it appears by what we have observed, one cannot consider with Attention, without being surpriz'd to find in it at the same time, Notions worthy of a great Philosopher, and Faults of such a Nature, as to let us know, that Philosophy was, as yet, in its Infancy when this Piece was compos'd, and which in Consequence ought to be look'd upon as so many Vouchers for its Antiquity.

Asto its Faults (not to say any thing of the Idea which offers itself, of a Sort of Gods, as absurd as their Origin, since far from passing for the first Causes of the Formation of the Universe, they are found to be form'd themselves, as it were by Chance, or at least,

by

by an Incident wherein they had no Influence) one may be satisfy'd, that there are two considerable ones to ascertain this System to be imperfect: The first is, that there is no mention made even of the Laws of Motion in Matter, without which, However, it is impossible to account for the *Phænomena* observable in the inanimate Parts which compose the World, nor even to convince how it can subsist.

The second is, that nothing likewise is said touching the Rules of Morality, which yet are so necessary for the Conduct of rational Agents; and, therefore, an Omission so much the more blamable in THOTH, as these Agents, according to his Principles of Religion, are depriv'd of the Knowledge of the true God, from which alone proceeds the Knowledge of the Law of Nature, which fills us naturally, while we consider one another, as Children of the same Father, with mutual Love, and so disposes us to assist those who want what is necessary, with the *good Things* which Providence has put in our Possession, and to give what Succours soever depend on us in the miserable Circumstances that they happen to be.

Such Faults, I think, are considerable enough to convince us of the Imperfecti-

ons of this System: It must be however confess'd, that the Objection made against the first, has no Force, any farther than as we look upon Matter as an Object incapable of thinking, since those who are of a contrary Opinion, might very well reply, That Luminaries, compos'd of a Matter to which they attribute this Faculty, possessing consequently this sublime Knowledge, and all the other sovereign Perfections appertaining to their Rank of *Zophesemin*, to which they suppose them exalted, can very well know what they have to do, and avoid, in the Course of their Movements.

As to the second, it is certain, that the Objection we have made, subsists in all its Force, and admits of no Reply: Indeed the Partizans of this System may say (in order to avoid the Force of this Objection) that the grand Rule, which obliges us to use our Neighbour, as we would be used by him in a parallel Case, remains as forcible on their Side as on ours: But we answer to this Assertion, after a satisfactory Manner, by demonstrating, that agreeably to such a System, this Rule becomes useless, as it furnishes Men with no Motive capable of engaging them to practice it constantly: No Motive, I say, because that of Self-interest and Decency, which they

they alledge, cannot pass for such, inasmuch as infinite Occasions fall out, when the Motives of Interest and Decency cannot take Place; whereas, those who acknowledge one only sovereign God, and his Providence, always find within themselves Sentiments of Conscience and Love, which engage them to behave themselves in a compassionate and generous Manner towards their Neighbours, even tho' their temporal Interest should suffer by it: I say nothing of the Motive which has its Foundation in Decency, since that is never permitted to enter in Competition with the Motive of Conscience and the Love of God; and as those who are sway'd by it, shew that their Sentiments of Religion are *very weak*, or rather (to explain myself in a juster Manner) *very false*.

This is enough, in my Opinion, to put my Readers into a Situation of judging of this System, both as Philosophers and Christians: However, to do it impartially all the Justice that it deserves, I ought not to pass in Silence a Particular which may set it in a strong Light, which is this;

I have taken Notice of a Passage, which gives room to think, that THOTH consider'd the Earth as a Planet: It is the Place where

where, after having spoke of the *Zophes-min*, he says, * *Mot* or *Mud* shone forth like the *Sun* and *Moon*; and to express this Effect, he makes use of a *Greek* Expression (*εξελαμψε*) *shone out*, which he applies in common to *Mot*, the *Sun*, and other luminous Bodies.

I conceive that *Mot*, being upon this Occasion a Part of the World distinct from others, it no longer implies the first Matter, of which he said a little before, that the Universe was made, since this Matter, having taken all Kinds of Forms, ceased to be what it was before the Formation of all Things, and that by this Word, which signifies *Mud*, a Denomination agreeing better with this Part of the World which we inhabit, than with any other, it is this which he meant, by attributing to it a Light resembling that of the *Sun*, *Moon* and *Stars*. 'Tis true, indeed, he said nothing of the Movements, which are as much the Property of it as of other Planets; but as I find in other Places, that the same Movement is attributed to it, that gives me room to think, that this Discovery, made in our Days, so long after THOTH, pass'd with him, as a Conjecture at least very probable.

The

The *Egyptian Cosmogony* deriv'd from that, which we have been explaining, furnishes us with this Proof, which is expressed there after this Manner: The Earth, (speaking of it as of a Globe, which it is) was roll'd within itself, and turn'd round continually. *It was rolled in itself*, from whence proceeds its different Oppositions to the Sun, which makes the Days and Nights, and *it turned round continually*, which marks out a successive Gradation renewed every Year about the Luminary, from whence it receives its Light.

But, as I am to confine myself wholly in this Work to Things which regard Religion and History, I leave to others to examine more profoundly these Speculations, which I touch upon but cursorily. That which I have yet to say concerning the Opinion, which attributes to subtle Matter, the Faculty of Thinking and Understanding will bring us back to our Point.

This Opinion, which, as we have seen, serv'd for a Foundation to the Religion of the *Egyptians* in particular, and to all *Paganism* in general, triumph'd formerly with more Lustre through all the *East*, than in any other Part of the World; It was there
literally

literally embrac'd and practic'd in all its Purity. The religious Worship, the *Eastern* paid only to the heavenly Bodies, and especially to the *Sun*, where, as it seem'd to them, the subtle Matter had establish'd her Throne, is a convincing Proof of it. From thence it pass'd to the *Greeks* and *Romans*; but it cannot be said, that it appear'd there in the same Purity as in the *East*, nor that it did not lose much of its Splendour by a Mixture of different Sorts of Worship, which they invented to do honour to other Deities, which they admitted at the same Time, under the Favour of the same Principle.

But not to enter into the Detail of the sundry Consequences, which different People have drawn from this Opinion, I will only observe, that it has always appear'd so plausible to most of the Ancients, who have apply'd themselves to the Consideration of the first Causes of all Things, and in particular of those of the wonderful Regularity observable in the Motion of the heavenly Bodies, that we don't find any one that has been so universally receiv'd.

There are likewise to be found many learned Men among the *Jews* and *Christians*, who have adapted it after the Example of the most famous Philosophers of
Greece,

Greco, tho' with opposite Views, seeing these, or rather their Followers, made use of them to support the external Establishment of *Paganism*, to the Prejudice of the Purity of *Christianity*: To the Prejudice, I say, of its Purity, and not to its total Subversion; for, as the Argument made use of by the *Christians* against them to destroy the Plurality of Gods, and establish at the same Time the Unity of one only sovereign Being, was grounded upon the one Principle of Natural Religion, with which *Christianity* so far agrees, that it tends only to make it appear in all its Force; this made such a Subversion impossible. Thus they had nothing else left to do to spoil and corrupt *Christianity* with the confused Mixture of the *Pagan* Worship, than to agree with the *Christians*, as to the Unity of one true God; and this they did, in Hopes that those, who, as well as themselves, allow'd of an intelligent Faculty in the heavenly Bodies, would likewise willingly consent, that they should continue to be honoured, not indeed as absolute and independent Gods, but only as lively Images of one only sovereign God, and as faithful Ministers who govern'd the World under him.

This Manner of doing Honour to the Stars, upon which they insisted, would
H have

have terminated in a relative Worship exactly the same as is at present practic'd under the Authority of the pretended Successors of Christ. If these are in the Right, how then could those rational *Pagans* be in the Wrong? I won't yet enter into the Merits of their Cause, I shall come to 'em by and by: In the mean while, I make no doubt, but all considerate Persons think, that such a Kind of Worship paid to the *Sun*, would have less degraded human Nature from the Use of Reason, and would have brought on Men fewer Evils and Troubles, than all those Forms of Worship which have been since establish'd in the World under such an Authority as before-mention'd. Yet if the like Kind of Worship had been known in the Time of *Origen*, how could he have answer'd to those well-meaning *Pagans*, without being controuled and battled by them? Whereas, he answers them in such a Manner, as lets us know, that the Church in his Time authoriz'd nothing of this Sort. *It is written*, says he to them, guided by a better Rule from *Mat. iv. 10. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and shall serve none other but him*, *Orig. lib. 5. pag. 237.* Behold now this great Man, who was of the Number of those Christians, that supposed the same Qualities in the Stars, as the Philosophers did, who defended a qualify'd
Paganism;

Paganism; behold, I say, how he avoided the fatal Consequences of an Error by which the others were seduc'd, and into which neither would have fallen, had they been able to conceive what the most famous Astronomer in the Universe, directed by the Hydrostatick Principles, has done in our Time, that the Course of the heavenly Bodies might be perform'd with that Order, Regularity and Exactness, which we have Reason to admire in 'em, by the Laws of Motion of projected Bodies, without the least Necessity of attributing to them any Principle of Knowledge.

But, as the Prejudices of these Defenders of a qualify'd *Paganism*, render'd them incapable of arriving at a Knowledge of such a System, or even of allowing of it, supposing them to have a *Newton* in their Time, it may be ask'd, whether the Worship they were willing to continue to pay to those heavenly Bodies, with the Restriction we have observ'd, was not as reasonable, and as well founded, as that which the Church of *Rome* pays to her pretended Mediators? It is the Business of that Church to resolve this Difficulty.

But till they do it in a satisfactory Manner, let us see the Reasons that the mode-

rate *Pagans* can alledge in Defence of their Notions.

The first, and the strongest that can be desired in such a Case, is, that the subtle Matter, which, according to their System, abundantly resides in the heavenly Bodies, has of itself, as being a Portion of the Divinity, the Faculty of thinking, knowing, and acting, which alone belongs to God.

The second, that is the Quality of Mediators which they attribute to them, is visible by the Influence which they have in Heaven and upon Earth; they give Light and Warmth; and their Motions being regular and constant, they point out to Travellers, wandering either upon the Sea, or uninhabited Desarts, which Way they are to steer their Course, in order to find their Country again: In a Word, we may be assur'd, that by the Oeconomy and Exactness, as well as Harmony, with which they mutually among themselves discharge their different Functions, they are lively Images of that sovereign Providence from whence arises the Comfort which those enjoy who fear God, and that nothing is wanting to Men to render 'em happy in this World, but to imitate their Conduct.

Have

Have the Defenders of the Multiplicity of Forms of Worship establish'd in modern Rome as plausible Reasons for supporting that Worship which they have instituted in Honour of their Saints? As to the first, and only one which can be of Weight, Are these Saints upon their System identical Portions of the Divinity? As to the second, Can they justify the Characters of Mediators, which they fix upon 'em, by as sensible and as incontestable Effects as the Defenders of qualified Paganism shew in theirs? Is it not, on the contrary, certain, that those which they endeavour to make pass for such, are a mere Delusion? Is it not besides unquestionable, that such a Presumption is directly opposite to the fundamental Law of Christianity, by which we are assured, that there is but one only Mediator between God and Man?

From all these Reasons, well considered, it follows, I think, clearly, that the Error of the Pagans of the latter Ages, is much more excusable than that of the degenerated Christians, whom we may well call the modern Pagans, since it is evident, that by their sacrilegious, and at the same Time ridiculous Practice, they bear more Resemblance to the extravagant Pagans of old Times, than to the primitive Christians,

ans, who, had they adopted such Maxims, could not, in all Probability, have triumph'd over *Paganism* as they have done.

Hitherto we have consider'd the first Fundamentals of *Paganism*, its Progress and Decay, without forgetting to point out its Revival in another Form. We have seen what were the Objects of its Worship, and particularly those which were added to it by THOTH, in order to embellish it, and improve it into a System of Religion, more suitable to his Ends: Our Business at present is to see whether among those Objects which he has made to pass for natural and eternal Gods, and in Honour of whom he establish'd a publick Worship, the only true and sovereign God was comprehended, as having likewise, at least indirectly, some Share in this Worship.





CHAP. III.

Wherein is shewn, that the ancient Paganism took no Notice of the true God in the Worship established in Honour of their imaginary Deities.

THERE are three Things which concur to convince us of the Truth of this Assertion.

1st, The *Cosmogony* of THOTH.

2^{dly}, The End which he manifestly had of establishing an arbitrary Government, which is incompatible with true Religion.

3^{dly}, The Testimony of ancient History, as well sacred as profane.

As to the first, which is the *Cosmogony* of THOTH, it appears plain, that the Worship which the *Pagans* establish'd in Honour of their imaginary Gods, had no Relation to the true God, and this is so certain, that, as we observ'd before, this *Cosmogony* tends directly to establish or promote *Atheism*. The Manner in which

THOTH

THOTH pretends the World was made, or to speak in a Stile more agreeable to his Notions produced, is a convincing Proof of this; since, far from ascribing any Part to the supreme Being, whom we adore as the first Cause of all Things, he never once mentions him, and has hereby given but too just Occasion to think, that he look'd upon his Existence as a Chimera, which had no other Existence but in the Imagination only.

Secondly, The End which THOTH appears principally to have had, to wit, of establishing an absolute and arbitrary Government, which will always be found inconsistent with true Religion, is another Proof that the sovereign Object of a true Religion and Worship, was intirely forgot in the false Religion of THOTH, and that he had no Share nor Part in the Worship design'd to establish and support such a Government.

It were but lost Labour, I think, to shew here, that THOTH had really such a Design; to have no Doubt hereof, we need only reflect, that he was a sovereign and absolute Prince, and the Author of that System of Religion, such as we have already related above and thoroughly examin'd.

If

If besides this Argument, how strong and convincing soever, we want others that were more levell'd to the great Capacity of the Bulk of Mankind, such as those are that are founded upon certain, plain and conspicuous Facts, here follows one among many that our old Historian himself furnishes us with.

Before THOTH succeeded to MENES, the first King of *Egypt*, and when he was only Privy-Counsellor of CRONUS, to assist him in the Government of his Empire, CRONUS having conceived some Jealousy of his Brother ATLAS, THOTH, instead of endeavouring to remove this his Suspicion, or to soften his Anger, perswaded him to throw ATLAS into a deep Ditch, where, by his Advice, he was buried Alive.

Nothing, in my Opinion, can diminish the Force of this Argument, unless we can shew, that the Minister of a Government, that is already absolute or despotick, may have stronger Reasons to maintain the Use of an arbitrary Power, than the Sovereign themselves have; I say, a Government already despotick, for we can easily conceive, that in a Kingdom where the Use and Force of Laws prevail, these Reasons may be much stronger upon

I

the

the Side of an evil Minister, or such a one whose Conduct and Views are directly opposite to the Use or Force of Laws. Being therefore certain, that TWOOTH's entire System was that of an arbitrary Government, I proceed now to the other Branch of my Proposition, where I affirm, that an arbitrary Government is in its Nature inconsistent with true Religion.

But as I am sensible that this last Part of my Proposition, how certain soever, will meet with greater and much keener Adversaries than the first; to wit, the Generality of the Clergy in all Religions established by Law, and all those whose Fortune and Preferment such as theirs, tends to the Support of arbitrary Government, it is but just and necessary that I enlarge on this Topick, and produce the fullest and strongest Evidence of the Truth thereof. And this is what I hope to perform, after I have remov'd a Difficulty which some Persons of no mean Rank and Character, have made against the Universality of my Assertion.

SECT.

SECTION L
*Containing an Answer to the Chief Objections
 made against asserting true Religion and
 arbitrary Government are incompatible.*

What occasion'd it, was the History of Japan, wrote in the German Language by M. KEMPFER, and lately publish'd in English by M. SCHUTZER, and I own, the Objection has no small Shew and Appearance of Reason in it, since it is certain, that according to the Notion this Book gives us of the Government of that Country, it is one of the most arbitrary and absolute, and yet it is not found to be more inconsistent with the true Religion, than with a great many others that are there establish'd or tolerated.

To prove this, we are told, that Christianity, which, according to our Principles, I own to be the true Religion, has been preach'd, and almost universally received in Japan; but Japan is allow'd to be one of the most arbitrary Governments in the World; it follows therefore, that such a Government is not always inconsistent with true Religion.

In order to answer this Objection, I agree, there is no Difference between *Christianity* and true Religion, supposing that the one, as well as the other, is found to be grounded upon the same Principle which consists to adore the Father in Spirit and Truth, and (contrary to the Declaration of *Christ*, it be not made a Kingdom of this World, much less to pretend thereby to have a Right to resist the higher Powers: But far from that, all that profess, or preach it, renouncing all absolute Authority over their Neighbours, mind nothing more than to do them good, or at least, to use them as they would be used.

But as this does not appear to be the Character of that *Christianity* which has been preach'd in *Japan*, since it was banish'd from thence, as causing Disturbances in the Government, it follows, that this Example does not in the least invalidate the Universality of my Proposition.

If it be farther urged, that in some manner it is probable the Idea given of *Christianity*, when it was first preached to the *Japoneſe*, was agreeable to that I give of true Religion, and for that Reason it appeared to make *ſo* great a Progress; I own it may be so, and am apt to believe it;

it; but this Acknowledgment is very far from giving any Advantage to my Adversaries; on the contrary, it establishes the Truth of my Opinion: Since this being really true, the Conclusion that may be drawn from it, is not that arbitrary Government and true Religion may be consistent together, but only that the *Japonese* Government is not really as arbitrary as KEMPFER describes it, at least as far as it concerns Religion: Since in this respect we find it milder and more reasonable than most Governments establish'd in *Europe*, and far from persecuting any one upon Account of Religion; every body enjoys there a perfect Liberty of Conscience, as a Right which is natural to all Mankind: And of this one is easily convinced by the Multiplicity of different Religions that are tolerated and even establish'd there.

So, when I say, that an arbitrary Government is inconsistent with true Religion, I mean that Sort of Government, which, against that Right which is the most essential to a Creature endow'd with Reason, assumes to itself that of forcing its Subjects to one Form of Religion, or to tolerate no other, but those whose Principles may be of use to form in them Motives of Conscience apparently good enough to persuade them blindly to submit to an arbitrary

arbitrary Government, and at the same Time to overturn and destroy within their Minds all the Principles of natural Equity, which are the same with those of true Religion.

It would not be difficult, in carrying this Reflection farther, to shew, that if the Religion preach'd to the *Japonesse* by the *Romish* Missionaries, was that of *Christ*, there would be between that and the true Religion an infinite Difference: But as for Reasons that I have before touch'd on, one cannot be persuaded, that between the *Christian* and the only true Religion, there can be any Difference, it clearly follows, that true *Christianity* was not preach'd to the *Japonesse* by the *Romish* Missionaries; but rather a Religion that was much like, at least in its Intent, to that contrived by THOTH, to bring his Subjects to submit by specious Motives of Conscience to the arbitrary Government he would establish.

I will not detain my Reader more particularly to shew how far such a Religion might agree with that of THOTH's, because this would carry me too far from my Subject. That which obtains most in *Europe*, and to the Principles of which, whoever makes the least Objection or Difficulty

culty to submit, are burnt alive, tend as much as THOTH's to eradicate from the Minds of Men all Sentiments of Equity, Love and Union between them, which the Knowledge of a supreme Being naturally inspires them with, is more than sufficient to shew us how nearly they resemble each other.

And, therefore, to come nearer to my Purpose, it is more convenient I should present my Reader with some Observations, in order to recal in his Mind the Motives which obliged THOTH to make so many Alterations in the Religion of his Ancestors. The Worship which they paid to Plants, could only serve to raise within themselves Sentiments of Union and Gratitude: 1st, Of Gratitude, in Relation to the Deity, which they imagin'd to see in the Vertue those Plants had to nourish them; and, 2^{dly}, Of Union among themselves, in observing with Pleasure, that this Vertue, which perhaps they took for an Effusion of the *materia prima*, communicated to each of them.

The religious Remembrance which they preserv'd for the Inventors of Arts, the Usefulness of which was so great and so universal, was not a Motive less engaging to unite them together, since they could

not

not but look upon the Authors as their common Fathers.

It might be also, that they look'd upon these Effects as a Consequence, the Goodness of a first Being, from whom they thought to derive their own, had for them, and by this Way of thinking they were brought unanimously to shew their Sense of Gratitude in this solemn Manner.

But without penetrating into their Manner of thinking, be as it will, it is evident, that if any reasonable Motive may be attributed to the publick and solemn Effects of their Piety, as there is no room to doubt but we ought, we find none that can bring them to Disunion or Hatred, nor by Consequence favour the Establishment of an arbitrary Power, since such an Establishment never can be brought to bear, nor support itself, but by Means of Division and Partiality, which the Patrons of such Power have the Art to sow among Men; it follows, that THOTH, to bring it about, had nothing else to do, but to introduce a System of Religion which, supposing a different Species of Men and Principles, would incline them, from a Motive of Conscience, to acknowledge in some a natural Pre-eminence that rais'd them above others, to which no one could aspire, without

without being branded by the Name of impious if not Heretick; and to which it was more easy to bring them, because the Spirit of Pride and Dominion, which had been already introduced by several Acts of Violence, whereby some had been exalted and more depress'd. Thus they were to believe as an Article of Faith, that there was a different Order of Men, to whom the whole Product of the Earth belong'd, by natural Right, and those Sovereigns had others under them, to whom they themselves oblig'd to allow some Part of it, upon Condition they should make it their intire Care to gather from the Hands of the meanest *Rank* of Men, the most excellent, and major Part of that Product, whereby, had the Notions of those Times been like ours, those should be meant who are employ'd in cultivating the Earth by the Sweat of their Brow, without being allow'd to keep any of its Fruits for themselves, but as much as it pleas'd their Sovereign to leave them; which is to say, much, little, or nothing at all, according as these reputed Slaves had kept to the Spirit of their Station, in conforming by a blind Zeal to the Principles of such a Religion.

But as such Principles are directly *opposite* to those of the *Christian Religion*,
 K which,

which, instead of encouraging Disunion, obliges to the contrary, to a mutual good Will, and to treat one another as proceeding from the same supreme Father, and consequently in the same Manner as we would be us'd ourselves; it follows, that all Governments which authorize it, cannot come from God, nor consequently agree with the *true Religion*.

SECTION II.

Shewing how the great End of Civil Government and true Religion coincide.

For the conceiving still better the Justness of the Consequence I have just now drawn, and bringing it to every-body's Capacity, it is proper to come to the Source of *Civil Government*, be it as it will, and to shew, that it ceases being such when it becomes Arbitrary.

It is certain, that all Men, consider'd as Men, are all equally dear to God, and there is no other Difference between them in this respect, but what they make themselves, as they remove from, or come near the End for which he created them. It is no less certain, that the End God propos'd in creating them, was to make them happy.

py, according as they should answer that End.

As they employ themselves in cultivating the Earth, they acquire an honest Subsistence, and keep themselves in Health: As they traffick upon the Sea, to transport from one Country to another, the Overplus they had gather'd, thereby they do good one to another, and by this mutual Intercourse, they become happier and wiser; so that, increasing their Knowledge, and reflecting on their Happiness, they are brought to consider the Goodness of their Creator to such a Degree as will not fail to raise their Hopes beyond this Life.

Such is the Condition of the just and upright Man; that is to say, him who sincerely endeavours by his Conduct to answer the End he was created for; but as, in this Number, some are found to be unjust and wicked (an odious Denomination, only due to those who would arrive at the Happiness of this Life, without taking the proper Means for it) and as those of so bad a Character, cannot subsist without injuring others, who merit the Name of virtuous, because they submit to those Means, which consist in cultivating the Earth, or if they are provided with a suf-

ficient Quantity of the Product of it, in employing themselves in such a manner as may add to the Happiness of their Neighbours, or at least relieve them as much as possible, in their Infirmities, or to help them out of unforeseen Misfortunes, it became natural to these honest People to defend themselves against the unjust ones.

Such I take to be the Origin of *Civil Government*, which, I think, would have never taken Place, if the Repose and Safety of those who endeavour to answer the End of their Being, had not requir'd it.

Thus I conceive, that when two hundred, or more Families, employ'd according to their different Inclinations, or Difference of each Country's Soil, either for the Pasture of Cattle, or the improving the Earth, in order to reap the Fruits of it, or in transporting those Fruits by Land or by Sea, to exchange them for others, to the mutual Advantage of the Inhabitants of the different Parts of the World: When those honest People, I say, found themselves robb'd and insulted in their Occupations, by Villains who would have none, but to live in Plenty and Debauchery at their Expence, I conceive they were forc'd to chuse one among themselves that could, and would employ all his Cares,
the

the Aids and Assistance they would afford him, in order to secure and punish the Authors of these Wrongs, in obliging them (had it been in their Power in those former Times, as it is in ours, if we were wise enough to make use of it) to work for the Benefit of those they had injur'd in so odious and unjust a Manner.

This is what we call *Civil Government*, whether it be trusted to one or more, no matter, provided it be faithfully administered, for the Good of those who wanted it, and according to essential Conditions of such an Establishment, and this is what may be call'd the fundamental Law of a Kingdom or Commonwealth, from which it is never permitted to swerve but in an extraordinary or unforeseen Case. If the contrary should happen, and those, or rather, to follow the Idea of a monarchical Government, he who is chosen to see those Laws executed, should violate them, and that to do it more securely, instead of calling to his Councils the richest and best reputed for their Honesty, among these Heads of Families, employs only those of the worst Character and Credit, such as those as he was chose to punish or destroy; then such a Government ceases to be a civil one, and becomes Arbitrary, which always happens, when he, who was intrusted

trusted with it, instead of governing for the Good of the People, and conformably to the chief End Government was establish'd for, has no other View than to maintain his Dignity or his private Interest, tho' directly to the Prejudice of those he is indebted to for it: Whether by Force, or by the Arts of Corruption; that is to say, by impoverishing, in order to depress many, and raise a few, the arbitrary Power be set up, it is not therefore less odious, less unjust, nor more consistent with the only *true Religion*: And by the Description I am going to give of that Religion, every one who retains any Sense of it, must be convinced of this Truth: But to render this Article shorter and stronger, I beg Leave to make use of the Method whereby Contraries are oppos'd to one another; and suppose, as by what I have said concerning the *Civil Government*, I am allow'd to do, that all Religion, what specious Appearance soever it may have of being the true one, is certainly false, if it be made use of to introduce or support arbitrary Power.

SECT.

SECTION III.
Shewing how an arbitrary Government, by its mischievous Tendencies and pernicious Consequences, is opposite to true Religion.

True Religion, as we have seen, is intirely founded upon the Knowledge of a first Cause of all Things, which we call God; who, as he must be a Being that is naturally wise and good, could have no other View in creating Men rationally but to make them happy, by the Use they should make of their Reason.

But an arbitrary Government, the Head of which makes every Thing tend to his Pleasure, and whose Subjects being deprived of the Benefit of both civil and natural Laws, have none, but his private Will, does not permit them to make Use of that Reason to shew the Absurdity of a Religion which serves to support an arbitrary Power, much less still to reject and abolish it; then it follows, that such a Government is directly opposed to the Design of God, and could not come from him, nor by Consequence support itself but by Force, or the Art of Corruption: Abominable Art! So it must certainly be, since the Principles it is grounded upon are bad
in

in themselves, as tending either to deny the Existence of a sovereign Being, or to give an Idea of him, as a Being void of all Wisdom and Goodness, and had by Consequence left Men incapable of making any other Distinction between Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, Misery and Cruelty; but that which would please the strongest and most unjust to set up: And so indeed it is practic'd, as we may every Day see, in all *arbitrary Governments*: There the Subjects, who are no better than Slaves, are deprived of the Liberty of following the Light of their Conscience, for fear, if the Truth should appear, it might excite in them an Abhorrence of Superstition, and instil in them a Love and Taste for *true Religion*, which is inconsistent with the Spirit of Slavery, because it brings Men to a rational Sense of Piety and Submission towards God, and of Justice and good Will towards one another.

The Loss of so precious a Liberty, is not the only Misfortune which afflicts Men of true Honour and Probity under an *arbitrary Government*; the Danger of being ill us'd in their Persons, and the Enjoyment of their Fortune, is also a necessary Concomitant of it; a slight Suspicion, that they disapprove such a Government, is
enough

enough to be taken up and sent to a hard Exile, or a gloomy Prison, or even to lose their Lives, without any Form of Law; and the most cruel and infamous Treatments constantly attend those who dare shew, that nothing is more contrary to the Intent and Will of God, than such a Manner of Governing.

Altho' these plain Observations are sufficient to convince us, that an *arbitrary Government* is the Scourge of Mankind, here is another, that I ought not to omit, to shew, that not only the good Will we owe one to another, but likewise our private Interest obliges us to unite all our Strengths to deliver those who groan under such a Slavery.

An *arbitrary Government* never sets any Bound to the Extent of its Dominions. The Passion an absolute Prince has to aggrandize himself, is as violent as the Love of Pleasure in a young Man, who throws off all Sense of Virtue, as soon as he is come of Age. He thinks of nothing but to satiate his Passions, which he endeavours to do, but in vain; because, as he runs Headlong to satisfy them, they increase as much, and even so far, when his Inheritance is dissipated, as to stop at nothing to gratify them more and more, and

L

even

even, at last, to rob on the Highway: Then it is Time that every one should take Care of themselves, and unite together, to divert the Danger which they have to fear from the raging Fury of such a Power: Who dares to say, that all the Wrong he does to others is no Injustice, and cares as little for it as a hungry Lion who devours his Prey. This second Comparison is necessary to finish the Picture of an *arbitrary Government* which I have been drawing. Sometimes it is a Lion, which destroys or frightens his Subjects, according as he is famish'd or despises them: At other Times it is a Lioness, who starves them in order to make Lions of them to enlarge her Empire. What we must conclude from thence, if this Idea be true, is, that as long as there shall be such Governments in the World, it will be impossible to live in Peace; and I beg Leave to ask those who would support them to the Prejudice of the People's Welfare, where is the Foundation of that Right whereby Men of the same Nature as others, pretend to have of devouring them? Or how can it be conceiv'd they can, according to Justice, live in Plenty and Voluptuousness, without being oblig'd to leave them as much as 'tis necessary for their Subsistence? And, on the contrary, think to have a Right of depriving of their Possessions
whom

whom they please, that they may enrich the most Crafty and Inhuman amongst them, to be the Supports of their Tyranny? If it must be so, the Case of the Virtuous and Upright, who are such by Principles of Conscience, is much to be pitied, while the Wicked and Voluptuous, who know how to stifle the Sense of theirs, and mind nothing but to insinuate themselves by Flattery, are the only fit Persons to be employ'd and gratified under such a Government.

Is this agreeable to the Idea St. Paul gives us of the Higher Powers, whom, he says, *we must obey for Conscience sake?* Does he not mean very clearly, that the Upright have nothing to fear from those Rulers? And here is quite the Reverse: Is it possible that there should be such Governments in the World, and particularly in those Parts where the Name of *Christians* sound so loud! Governments which requite neither Wisdom nor Goodness in the Rulers, but only much Presumption, and a great Shew of Politeness towards their Flatterers, and particularly those whose Assistance they most stand in need of; I don't say, to get the Love of their Subjects, which is quite out of their Thoughts, but merely to keep them in Fear and under the Yoke.

Oderint dum metuant.

What Slavery is this, which cannot be alleviated but by hurting one's Conscience, and which it is impossible to shake off, but in forsaking one's native Country, and whatever is dearest to us.

People that are so happy as to be under a free Government, become industrious, and enrich themselves by their Industry and Labour. If they happen to be reduc'd to Streights, they consider how to set themselves at large, without doing any body Wrong. They rather chuse to transport themselves into uninhabited Countries, and there grub up strange Lands, than to invade those of their Neighbours; but those who are under the Yoke of an arbitrary Government, are depriv'd of these very Means; they being not allow'd so much as transporting themselves, but on Condition of being always Slaves. So they must absolutely perish in their Misery, or follow the Maxims of their Tyrant, in giving themselves up to him, as Instruments to Ruin, sack and destroy any who will not submit to his Tyranny.

These

These are Circumstances more than sufficient to make us abhor an arbitrary Government. But yet this is not all: Here is another still, which highly concerns us to know.

An arbitrary Government enterprizes what pleases him, and when it pleases, he knows his Neighbour's Disposition; their Designs are always open to him, his own are impenetrable, and no sooner known than put in Execution. The only Thing he has to fear, is, the Union of other Powers against him, but this he knows how to prevent, by raising Factions amongst them, which is easily done in a free Country: And thence we must conclude, the only Means to ward us against this furious Monster, is endeavouring to keep it very low, or destroy it entirely.

I do not pretend, when I am speaking against arbitrary Power, to oppose the Right, the Use of it, if kept within the Bounds of Reason, naturally belongs to every Head of a Family, at least as far as the Laws permit: Much less free his Servants from the Obligation they lie under of a strict Obedience to his Will; on the contrary, I think that, conformably to the Apostle's Mind, they are so far bound in Conscience to such a Submission, as even
not

not to shew their Dislike of his fantastical Humour; but I cannot conceive how the Chief of a civil Society, who, as such, has no Power but what he receives at their Hands, to employ it for their Welfare, in securing and protecting them against the Injustice and Cruelty of the Wicked, can of his own Fancy, and for his mere Pleasure, how unreasonable soever it may be, force them to expose their Lives in ravaging, plundering and massacring their Neighbours, from whom they have received no Injury, and by whose Subjection they have no Good to expect, but rather much Reason to fear, that the Increase of their Tyrant's Power, will serve only to make their Slavery the harder, and put it out of their Reach ever to shake it off.

I know how ancient this pretended Right of Princes is; this Saying of the old Lyrick Poet makes it too plain to question it: They take mad Resolutions, and their People suffer for 'em.

Delirant Reges plestuntur Achivi.

But can we in our Time reasonably think it unlawful to secure us against such dangerous Attempts, and after so many sad Experiences made at the People's Cost,

that

that we now at last should not become
the wiser for it.

SECTION IV.

*Stating a Difference of Notion between Kings
in former Ages, and those of the latter.*

Kings, in those ancient Times, might
very well be considered as only Heads of
Families, and therefore those under them
were under a Necessity blindly to obey their
Orders, without examining whether they
proceeded from a transient hasty Passion,
much less finding fault if an humble Re-
monstrance thereupon was return'd with a
peevish Reproof. They might then be
obliged to put the Apostle's Advice in
Practice, 1 Pet. even before it was given;
but now the Case is much alter'd, since a
King being at the Head of, I do not
know how many hundred or thousand Fa-
milies, who being independent, and ha-
ving no Alliance or Relation of Kindred
with him, and hardly any between them-
selves, can therefore only constitute a civil
Society, which, being founded on Laws,
cannot stand but by a wise and just Execu-
tion of those Laws, in the Observation of
which consists their Security and mutual
Happiness; and, therefore, when such fun-
damental Laws are transgressed or viola-
ted,

ted, there is a Dissolution of the civil Relation between the Prince and his Subjects.

VI
I do not however intend to deprive the Kings in our Times, from that Right which other Heads of Families are justly intitled to, as absolute Masters in their own Families, whereby they may, as much as they please, vent their Humours upon their Servants (meaning the menial Servants, and not those of the State) without breaking the Bonds of civil Society, and even believe, there may be some Case, where a Prince ought to make those Servants sensible, 'tis impertinent in them, to treat with Haughtiness or Scorn, those Subjects who have not the Happiness to belong as they do, to a great Prince, since the meanest Subject in a civil Society, or which is the same, a free Subject, who as such is engaged with him on no other Condition but those prescribed by Laws, is naturally above all the King's other Servants who are not in publick Employments, unless that they, as meer Servants, pretend to take more upon them than strict Decorum or Decency would permit their Master, who having no other but a civil Superiority, cannot, with any Shew of Justice, treat any of his Subjects who keep within the Bounds of proper Respect, but
with

with Tokens of Condescension, and never with Arrogance, and much less with any Harshness or Contempt: And if that Subject was disrespectful (which he could not be without transgressing the Laws) he should, according to those Laws, be judged and punish'd, and not as the Prince's Passion or Anger directs.

We shall rightly conceive the Justness of this Notion, if we shew the Reason upon which it is grounded.

A Sovereign, considered as a Man, has no other Right but what is common with all Men. That which constitutes him a political Person, Prince or King, is, as we have seen, a meer Result of the People's *Authority*, which by their Choice or Consent is centred in him, not to use it to their Prejudice, but only to maintain them in the Enjoyment of their Rights and Liberties, and he cannot apply it to any other End, without perverting and abusing it. If the Case just now mention'd, cannot pass for such an Abuse, since 'tis that of an insolent Man who is punish'd as such, yet 'tis certain, this Manner of punishing is unlawful, since the Sovereign applies it to his own Cause, and consequently not as a Sovereign, but a private Man, who in that Capacity is oblig'd to

M

refer

refer himself to the Decision of Judges appointed or establish'd by Law.

I should not have thought of giving this short and summary Explication of the different Powers and Privileges that belong to a civil Government, as distinguish'd from that of a Family, if it did not tend to give a more proper Idea of sovereign Authority, than that which is generally conceiv'd: And this is, I think, the most proper Use that can be made of it.

Now, having consider'd the Nature and yet terrible and unavoidable Consequences of *arbitrary Government*, and prov'd its Inconsistency with *true Religion*, I proceed to produce the Testimonies of *Ancient History*.



CHAP.



CHAP. IV.

Containing the Testimonies of the Ancient History, both sacred and profane, which shew particularly, that the Ancient Paganism took no Notice of the true God in the Worship establish'd in Honour of its imaginary Deities.

IT would be too long here to quote all the Passages of the Scripture, where it is said or imply'd, that those who *love not their Neighbour, know not God*, because the Consequence following from them (to wit, they cannot then direct to him their external Worship, in which alone they make their Religion consist) is indirect and too general, since they relate rather to bad *Christians*, and false *Israelites*, than to *Pagans*: And therefore we must have recourse to Testimonies more full and express to the Purpose, directly to prove and demonstrate this our Inference or Conclusion.

Several of this Sort are to be found in the Scripture, but I will confine myself to those of *St. Paul*, in the first Chapter of

his Epistle to the *Romans*, and the 18th Verse, with which 'tis proper here to begin, positively says, *The Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth of God in Unrighteousness.* But what is it to hold the Truth of God in Unrighteousness? And what is this crying Sin? It is, as it appears by the following Verses, because the *Pagans*, or their Guides, when they knew God, they not only omitted to glorify him as God, and to be thankful, but carried this Injustice to the utmost, they changed the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds and four-footed Beasts and creeping Things: Thus it clearly appears, that the *Pagans*, or the first Authors of Paganism, having chang'd the Truth of God into a Lie, have worshipp'd and serv'd the Creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

The proper Explication and Sense of this Verse, has not, I own, been follow'd by all the Interpreters; but we shall soon have Occasion to shew, that they had no Ground to affirm, as they have done, that the Creator himself was, as well as the Creature, the Object of the *Pagan* Worship, and that our Explication, which is different

different from theirs, is intirely agreeable to the Sense of the Apostle.

In the mean while, we must conclude, from all these Passages just now mentioned, that tho' the *Pagans* knew God, or at least might have known him by the Use they should have made of their Reason, in considering the Necessity of such a Thing for the Making and Government of the World, yet they did not glorify him by a publick Worship, but on the contrary, *became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkned to such a Degree*, that they thought fit to resolve there should be no publick Acknowledgment made of him by any solemn Worship establish'd by Law; for it must needs be in this Sense, that we must take these Words of the twenty-eighth Verse, *οὐκ ἐν ἑνὶ ὄψει*, which properly signify to acknowledge both the Power and Goodness of God, and this will appear clear beyond all Manner of Doubt, to any who compares these Words with the Beginning of the twenty-first Verse, and by this Comparison of one with the other, it will plainly appear, that the Meaning, or Reference they point at, is the same that results from these two Words, Gratitude and Ingratitude, or to come still nearer between

tween *noscere* & *agnoscere*, i. e. Knowledge and Acknowledgment.

Besides, that this Assertion concerning the Beginning of Idolatry, as respecting in no Manner the Worship of the true God, is agreeable to the publick and constant Practice of the *Pagans*; according to what *St. Paul* says of it. This is also supported and put in a clear Light, by the Reflections *EUSEBIUS* makes on this Subject, at the End of the twenty-ninth Page of his *Preparat. Evangel.* beforemention'd; who, after having assured, that the *ancient Pagans* acknowledge no other God but the Stars, says, *the Stars were the only Beings which were called Gods, and the * Demons*

* This Observation of *EUSEBIUS*, concerning Demons, honour'd with a religious Worship in *Greece*, gives me Occasion to make two other Remarks, that may be of some Use and Service to make us the better understand the seventeenth Verse of the thirty-second Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, as also the twenty-eighth Verse of the tenth Chapter of *St. Paul's* first Epistle to the *Corinthians*.

1st, With Reference to this particular Remark, if I conceive a-right his Design, I think it was to shew us, that there was a great Difference between the Demons acknowledged by the *Greeks*, and those of whom he speaks in the Verse quoted above, which he explains, by supposing, that by them we must understand evil Spirits, or Beings that have no real Existence, but in the Imagination only, such as certainly were those Deities that grows in our Gardens, and that consequently the true God could shew no more regard to Offerings and Oblations made to Plants, than if they had been made to evil Spirits, or imaginary Entities only.

2^{dly},

both good and bad (meaning those admitted since by the Greeks, and which, to distinguish them from mortal Souls, they call'd invisible Spirits) were not known in those Times. It is said, Page 30. that our sacred Writings confirm it, quoting to this Purpose, Deut. iv. 19. which he explains thus; God has let the Heathen, especially the Egyptians (from whose Religion MOSES endeavours to deter the Israelites) worship the Sun, Moon and Stars; but had reserved only to the Hebrew Nation, the Privilege of being initiated into the true Religion (*εὐνοίαν*) consisting in both the Knowledge of the Maker and Disposer of the Universe, and the true Worship of him.

For, adds he afterwards, the Heathen Gods are not like the God of Israel, they themselves being Judges, Deut. xxxii. 31. in the Septuagint Translation; and ver. 17.

adly, If we could suppose that the Honour paid to Plants as a Reference or Relation to the *materia prima*, and that this Matter, in the Opinion of the Men that liv'd in the first and earliest Ages, was really the first Principle of all Things, it would then follow, that all the inferior and subordinate Worship, such as that which was given to Creatures, with an Intention to honour the Creator, was criminal and odious to this first Principle; and consequently that which the Church of Rome offers of this Kind, must be much more so, since those Times of Ignorance; which God winked at, are past and gone, and that he has commanded all Men now to repent, by forsaking all those unlawful and idolatrous Worships, and only now adoring the Father as the only Object of our Worship in Spirit and in Truth.

*they sacrificed unto * Demons, not to God: To Gods unknown, newly sprung up.* These Expressions are not such, I think, as can agree only to distinct Names of the same sovereign Being, as some partial Interpreters would induce us to believe by a strained Construction put upon these Passages of the Scripture, that they may maintain their Prejudices in Favour of the *Pagan Religion*, as if by the several Objects they worshipped, they had a Mind only to worship the only true God under different Denominations.

Our Sentiment, which is the Reverse of this Notion, is also confirmed by Arguments founded on THOTH's Memoirs which EUSEBIUS has preserv'd; and this manifestly appears by the Manner he speaks of him, or of SANCHONIATHO, his Transcriber: Here are his own Words, taken out of the same Book, Page 31. *He delivers no Theology concerning the God above all Things, nor concerning the Inhabitants of Heaven* (meaning

* This last Part of the Verse, which speaks of Demons, seems to me to confirm the Explication given above, at the End of the first Remark, since, if the Idolaters did not address their religious Worship but to Plants only, between whom, and the Demons, there is no Affinity or Relation; 'tis probable then, that Moses imagin'd one, the more to expose and ridicule a Worship address'd to Beings that had only a fictitious and imaginary Existence, and at the same Time, how abominable it is, to address either directly or indirectly to others, but the true God only.

(meaning the *Angels*) but only concerning mortal Men and Women, and those none of the best, either for *Wisdom* or *Virtue*, but those of the most vicious Sort, and affirms, that these are the Persons which, even down to his Time, were received and worshipped as Gods in the Cities and Countries.

We find in EUSEBIUS's fourteenth Book, Chap. 16. Pag. 755. another Observation like this, whereby the Truth of our Assertion is further demonstrated.

EUSEBIUS's Animadversion upon the *Egyptian Cosmogony*, affords us another Argument which is equally strong and convincing. This *Cosmogony* deliver'd by DIODORUS SICULUS, and which cannot be suspected of being forg'd by PHILO BIBLIUS, as some have insinuated, since it was known before his Time, which was later than DIODORUS's Death. This *Cosmogony*, I say, contains this remarkable Passage, which, as GROTIUS observes, agrees in Substance with SANCHONIATHO's, this only excepted, which is, as later Commentaries usually are more particular and nice in Attempts to a mechanick Solution and Explication of the Generation of the World, without any Intervention of the Deity.

N

This

This Conformity of the one with the other, is really so great, and so remarkable, that one cannot help admitting it as a convincing Proof, that both those Historians took their Notions from the same original Author, THOTH. EUSEBIUS's Reflections thereon, Page 21. well deserve the Reader's Attention, since we find him positively asserting, that THOTH believ'd so little God had any Share in the Production or Making of the World, that he never so much as once mentions him, or gives the least Hint of the Existence of such a Being in his *Cosmogony*.

This our Assertion I have proved the more fully, as being in Opinion the best and surest Means to prevent the Mistake which several learned Men have fallen into, fancying that SANCHONIATHO agrees with MOSES in his Description of the World's Creation. The Occasion of this Mistake proceeds, no doubt, from PORPHYRY's affirming SANCHONIATHO to have receiv'd Memoirs or Information from HIEROMBALUS, a Priest, meaning very likely JERUBBAAL or GIDEON, who nevertheless was no Priest. But this Opinion is so ill-grounded, that 'tis astonishing to see how several Authors of great Character should have approved of and supported

ed it, since there is not in this remaining Fragment, the least Appearance of SANCHONIATHO's believing the *mosaical* Books, which were the Rule of GIDEON's Faith, and whoever rightly or truly understands his *Cosmogony*, will, on the contrary, see, that as we have shewn from EUSEBIUS's plain and express Testimony, far from agreeing with MOSES's Doctrine, it is directly opposite to his whole System.

It may have happen'd, indeed, that SANCHONIATHO being a curious and inquisitive Man, and cautious enough, to publish nothing; but after having consulted Persons of *different* Religions and Countries, would have had recourse to GIDEON's Memoirs, to make use of them in some other Book, which, as PORPHYRY intimates, he wrote concerning *Jewish* Affairs; but there is no Probability, *that*, on this Occasion, PORPHYRY meant this his *Phœnician* History, which we are now considering, since he does not therein come so low in Time as to speak even of the very Beginning of the *Jewish* Nation, which cannot be put higher in Time than that of *Abraham's* Promise, which God made him of giving the Land of *Canaan* to his Posterity.

Now, as it clearly appears, that SAN-
CHONIATHO, in his *Cosmogony*, follows not
MOSES, but THOTH, into the foulest Sink
of *Heathenism*, which is the Neglect of the
sovereign and only true God; it follows
from thence, that THOTH had voluntarily
miss'd, or forsaken the Foundation of na-
tural and only *true Religion*, which con-
sists in applying ourselves to know well,
and consequently, love and obey him who
is the Founder and Supporter of our Be-
ing, and whom 'tis not enough to ac-
knowledge within ourselves, but must like-
wise make an open and publick Profession
of worshipping him, and that in such a
Manner, that we may, at the same Time,
excite and cultivate in our Hearts, proper
Sentiments of Submission, Confidence and
Love for him, and of Equity, Compassion
and good Will for all Men, without ex-
cepting any, as all of 'em in some Manner
or other, participating of his Perfections
or Favours, as well as of our Wants and
Necessities; *Man being not only made in the*
Likeness of God, after his own Image, but
subject also, as we all are by Nature to the
same Passions and Infirmities.

But instead hereof, we find that THOTH
has laid the Foundation of the abomi-
nable, as well as absurd and foolish Reli-
gion

gion of the *Egyptians*, since it tended wholly to conceal from them that most important Truth, and the most essential to the Happiness of a rational Creature, and consisted only of meer external Acts of Piety and Devotion, whereby they served and adored, I do not say the Creator together with the Creature, as the Idolaters of our Time do, but the Creature alone, laying quite a Side the mention of our own, as well as their *Creator, who is God over all blessed for ever. Amen.*

I might, perhaps, not improperly stop here, in order to shew my Reader, and prove to him, *in a full and convincing Manner*, that these two Sorts of Idolatries are both criminal, as being both equally contrary to, and absolutely forbidden by that Commandment, which obliges us to render to God, and to him alone, that inward as well as outward Acknowledgment of Worship and Adoration we owe him, and to no other; but as this would lead me beyond the Bounds contained in THOTH's *Cosmogony*, let it suffice to give this Hint here, in Hope some other Occasion may offer, to consider more particularly the Consequences which naturally follow from that first and fundamental Commandment God, as well as our natural Duty, has imposed upon us, especially
if

if the Reader pleases to recollect together with this Hint, what I noted before in my second Remark, made on that of EUSEBIUS's, concerning the Intention the *Phœnicians* might have had of directing to God the religious Worship they perform'd to Plants: For 'tis now high Time to resume our proposed Design, and finish the Explication of the twenty-fifth Verse of *Rom. i.* which is already begun, Page 84.

The most important and only Difficulty which remains in it, and which we must now remove, consists in the double Meaning the Preposition *παρά* is susceptible of, since this Preposition can equally signify *besides* the Creator, according to ARIES MONTANUS, &c. or against the Creator, according to the *Ethiopic* and BEZA's Translation, which last is agreeable to the Meaning which we must necessarily take in the thirty-first Verse of the eighteenth Chapter of the *Acts* of the Apostles, where *παρά τὸν νόμον*, signifies in Opposition or against the Law, as *παρά τὸ διατεταγμένον*, against the imperial Constitution.

We shall be fully convinc'd this Meaning which we follow is the truest, if we have regard to the Context of the Apostle's Discourse, and especially to the Connection of the Verse we now explain with the
twenty-

twenty-first and twenty-eighth, where it is said, that the *Pagans* did not glorify God as God, and retain'd him not in their Knowledge, i. e. as I have shewn before, took no Notice of him in their publick Worship.

But that nothing be wanted to shew more and more the Certainty of this our Interpretation, and put it beyond all doubt, there is another convincing Proof, which we must add to the others; it consists in its Agreeableness with the ancient Translations of the Scripture, viz. the *Syriack*, *Vulgate*, *Ethiopic*, &c. where 'tis said, that the Heathens worshipped and served the Creature rather than the Creator preferably, or in Opposition to the Creator, forsaking the Creator, &c. These different Manners of interpreting are so strong, that they signify not only a meer neglecting the Creator, occasion'd, perhaps, by considering with too much Attention, the Wonders of the Creation, but also a formal Preference, attended with such a Contempt, as implies a direct Affront; and this is what *Beza* gives us to understand by translating it, *præterito creatore*, which means, to pass by the Creator in Favour of the Creature, as we usually do an unworthy Person, who intrudes himself amongst honourable ones, to whom we had a Mind to shew extraordinary

dinary Marks of Respect agreeable to their Merits.

Such were the Beginnings and Progress of Idolatry; and thus it is evident, that the Pagan Worship had no Manner of Reference to the true God. If the Inferences and Conclusions which follow naturally enough from the Passages before cited, appear too strong, as they seem to give the *Pagans* a Manner of Thinking, that perhaps they had not in setting up Idolatry, I agree to give them up, and stand only by the Conclusion, which most directly follows; to wit, that they took no Notice of the true God in their solemn Worship by Law establish'd.

This was the Assertion I was to prove, and that nothing may be wanting, I will confirm it by two other Testimonies, that are both founded upon the constant Practice of *ancient Paganism*; one, we have from PHILO BIBLIUS, who in his Preface to the Translation of SANCHONIATHO's History, affirms, that such was the Constitution of the State. The particular Way he delivers it, which removes all Doubts that remain thereupon, is too remarkable not to be mentioned; here it follows, as it is in EUSEBIUS's *Preparat. Evangel.* Pag. 32. which he, PHILO, did not affirm; but
after

after having read a vast Number, which he calls a Forest of Books, which were not to be found among the *Greeks*.

The other Testimony is taken from St. PAUL's Observation upon an Altar formerly erected to an unknown God, but as it requires a particular Dissertation, and furnishes us besides with several Reflections that are useful and proper to the Subject we treat of, it deserves a Chapter a-part.



CHAP. V.

Where it is shew'd, by another Testimony of Antiquity, that the ancient Pagans took no Notice of the true God in their publick Worship.

THIS is taken from the Account given us of St. PAUL, in the 17th Chapter of the *Acts* of the Apostles, Verses, 16, 17, &c. to the 34th. The Substance of which follows:

16. *Now while PAUL waited for SILAS and TIMOTHY at ATHENS, his Spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the whole City given to Idolatry.—*

O

19. *Then*

19. *Then certain Philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoicks encounter'd him, took him, and brought him into Areopagus, saying, may we know what this new Doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? —*

22. *Then PAUL stood in the midst of, that so much celebrated Society, and said, ye Men of Athens, I perceive that in all Things ye are too superstitious.*

23. *For, as I passed by and beheld your Devotion, I found an Altar with this Inscription, to the unknown God: Whom therefore ye ignorantly Worship, him declare I unto you.*

24. *God that made the World and all that is therein, seeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands, &c.*

It appears plain, that the Altar whose Inscription drew here the Attention of St. PAUL, was dedicated to a Deity different from all the others the *Athenians* us'd to worship; unto which, as we are inform'd from other Authors and Accounts, they had, at a certain Time, when a furious Plague rag'd among them, offer'd up in vain, a great Number of Sacrifices, to be delivered

delivered from this terrible Havock and Affliction, but convine'd at last by sensible Experience, of the Inefficacy of all their most fervent Prayers they had offer'd up, they were determin'd, by the Advice and Persuasion of a certain Philosopher (whether it was EPIMENIDES, or some other, is of no Importance) to erect an Altar to a God then unknown to them; upon which they had the Pleasure and Satisfaction of a favourable Answer to their Prayers; but as they were still ignorant who this God was, to whom they ow'd their Deliverance, they were resolv'd, however, to perpetuate the Memory of so signal a Favour they had so long and ardently wish'd, and thereupon order'd the Inscription upon the Altar they had here dedicated to him, and whose Sense, how plain and obvious soever, has yet been very much mistaken; and this is what we intend now to examine and put in a clear and full Light.

It has been generally thought, that the God here mention'd by St. PAUL, and who deliver'd those Idolaters from the Fury of this raging Pestilence, was the *true God*, and so far they are right; but they suppose at the same Time, tho' against the express Testimony of the same Idolaters, that they knew the Author of their Deliv-

verance, as to which I think they are mistaken. I agree with St. PAUL, who says in his Epistle to the *Romans*, Chap. i, Ver. 18. *that Men who retain the Truth in Unrighteousness*; or, to speak more clearly, who deny the real Existence of such a Being, are *inexcusable*, because his Works so plainly shew his *eternal Power and Godhead*: But if we rightly consider the bad Principles with which those Men were endowed, as we have already seen they were from the *Cosmogony*, whose Influence and Belief then generally obtain'd, it will not be difficult to conceive, that these Principles laid them under such Prejudices, as render'd them almost incapable of knowing the *true God*; and accordingly we see, that when St. PAUL presented himself to their Posterity, to call them to the Knowledge of the *true God*, they were very few who embraced this Worship, such, and so great were the Obstacles which their ancient Prejudices laid them under.

Thus all the good Disposition of Mind which one would attribute to them on this Occasion, were Death still raging on them on all Sides; they were at a Loss what Deity, or (to speak as the Idolaters of our Age do) what *Saint* they should devote themselves to; this Disposition, I say, cannot be reasonably stretched farther,

ther, than the erecting of this Altar to the Honour of a Deity which could know, and be willing favourably to accept this Token of their Devotion they were offering up to him, notwithstanding they had no distinct Knowledge of him: And as this their Behaviour indicates no such Intention in them, as might overturn and contradict the Sense of their Inscription, so clearly express'd, and in so solemn a Manner set up, I conceive, even as to this external Act of their Devotion, they must still pass for down-right Idolaters, and therefore must, as TERTULLIANUS did, take these Altars consecrated to unknown Deities, as an Idolatry more refin'd than the former, or to come still nearer to the Manner of expressing his Mind, an *Athenian* Idolatry, as his own Words witness:

*Invenio plane ignotis Deis aras prostitutas,
sed attica Idolatria est.*

TERTUL. lib. i. adversus MARCIONEM.

But to go still farther, this Sentiment is even, as I take it, agreeable to that of the Apostle himself, since, as it manifestly appears by his observing their setting-up that unknown God, as they did their other Deities, in Temples, he had thereby a proper Occasion to inform them, that this unknown God, or rather God, as he,
by

by a Transition from the one to the other, insinuates (that is, from an imaginary God whom they thought to be like those they had been taught by the *Cosmogony* of THOTH) God, says he, *seeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands.*

By this Manner of St. PAUL's teaching, I hope I may be allow'd to draw two Inferences only by the Way, and two others which will be as a Conclusion of all the Proofs which have served to shew, that the Athenian Worship address'd to the unknown God, was a meer Idolatry, and had no Manner of Reference to the true God.

As to the first, we cannot enough admire, or imitate the Wisdom with which this Apostle behaved himself before the *Areopagus*: How he makes use of this Occasion to preach the *true God* to these Unbelievers! How he endeavours to conciliate their Favour, and at the same Time engage their Attention, by improving to their Advantage, a small Ray of Light, that this Monument of their Ancestors Piety here suggested him! With what Prudence he sets a Value upon this Token of their Superstition, to bring them to the first Principles of natural Religion, which they

they had lost, by suffering themselves to be so deeply prepossess'd with the atheistical Principles of THOTH's *Cosmogony*! This was, as we say, to take them at the greatest Advantage.

Secondly, we may infer from the Reflection St. PAUL makes upon the Nature of the Author and Lord of the Universe, to make them sensible of the Absurdity which they fall into, who pretend to fix him to any particular Place; and that all those who regard Churches or Temples of the *Christians*, otherwise than convenient and proper Places for their religious Assemblies, whether it be to pray together, or to hear or deliver edifying Discourses, to encourage one another to live piously, soberly and godlily, and to make a solemn and unanimous Profession of Living accordingly, shew thereby, that their Idea or Notion of God, is not more rational than that of the *Athenians*.

Hence it appears, how far they may be wrong, who disprove speaking of God and Religion but in consecrated Places; and how much, by such Way of Thinking, Superstition must still prevail; for if contrary to our Saviour's Revelation, which I conceive to be the most essential Part of the Gospel, God ought to be worshipp'd

worshipp'd in particular Places, that must be for no better Reason, but that they may the more freely indulge themselves in other Places and Times, in any Thing which might not so well suit God's Worship in Spirit and in Truth, which is just the Reverse of what *St. Paul* so conformably to natural Religion says, *1 Cor. x. 31. whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* From which Reflection it might naturally follow, that instead of consecrating Places for Worship, we should rather make of any Place of Diversion such Places, as no *Christians* should be ashamed to appear there, or banish God for some Time from their Minds and Hearts.

But farther, if that Place of Learning (*Arcopagus*) without any Consecration, became in a Manner a Place of Worship, why should not any consecrated one, become a Place of Learning likewise to the *Glory of God*?

I remember to have read of a *Pagan* Temple in *Egypt*, where, in order to fix and determine the Length of the Year by the heliacal Rising and Setting of the Stars, a Circle was contrived in the Building, and divided in 365 Parts, each Part containing a Day, where such an Observation was mark'd: What Inconvenience would

would there be, if our lofty Cathedral, instead of being lock'd and unlock'd for Shew and Reward, it was all the Day long left open, and employ'd in still better Observations, to improve the Knowledge of *Astronomy* as well as *Religion*, and other useful Learning, by free and open Conversations, which might be done without any Disturbance, and with much Edification, provided no Venders be suffered there, and any rude or uncivil Person be immediately turn'd out? How greater the Advantage resulting from thence, than the Consecration would be, every-body might soon perceive?

God indeed condescended formerly to give some Tokens of his Presence in the Temple of *Jerusalem*, but this was only for particular Reasons, which subsist no more, since *Christ* came to inform us, that the true Worshippers ought to worship neither at *Jerusalem*, or in the Mountain of *Samaria*, but every-where they shall henceforth worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth; so it was foretold, *Mal. i. 11. From the rising of the Sun, even unto the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every Place Incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure Offering; for my Name shall be*
P great

great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.

So we see it was to this End, that the Instruction the Apostle gave to all those who were assembled in the *Areopagus*, tended, after he had represented to them, how God vouchsaf'd to be the Refuge of their Ancestors in an extraordinary Calamity, exhorted them to make him the only and constant Object of their Devotion. It is he who gave them to understand, who is the true *θεός μεγιστός*, an Expression so proper to make them conceive the Relation that God has to us, as being our best and nearest Parent, since it is in him we live, we move and have our Being, and is consequently such as we may have recourse to with Success on all necessary Occasions; and these are such Qualities, as were not to be found in any of their Gods, acknowledg'd by the State, and whose Worship was establish'd by Law.

The third and principal Inference, at least with respect to the Design I have here in View, in producing this famous Act or Monument of Antiquity, with the Apostle *Paul*, to shew, that it was a constant and universal Practice among the *ancient Pagans*, to take no Notice of the
true

true God in the Exercise of their *publick Worship*, is, as it plainly appears, that the *Worship* they paid this *unknown God*, was the very same as that they were accustomed to give to the other Deities established by Law among them; it thence clearly follows, that they had not any such Idea or Notion of this God, as what belongs to the *true God*, and that they only supposed him a God of the same Kind with the others, otherwise they would have honoured him after another Manner, and by a more distinguish'd and solemn *Worship*, to shew his Superiority over them, as the modern *Pagans* do, or they would have worshipp'd none else but him, as the true Disciples of *Jesus Christ* do; but we find on the contrary, that they had made no Alteration or Change in their publick *Worship*, that mark'd the Preference of the *true God* above their other Deities, much less that they excluded the last to serve only the *true God*. Far from this, it evidently appears from the Manner which St. PAUL expresses in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth Verses of this Chapter, that the Altar erected to this Deity, had nothing that distinguish'd it from those erected to the others; but on the contrary, those stood in a higher and more honourable Place, that gave them a Pre-eminence; for these Statues

were conspicuous, and offer'd themselves to the Eyes of all Passengers; but this Altar was scarce visible, and appear'd less remarkable than that of the obscurest and meanest *Saint* in the Church of *Rome*. Nothing therefore is more plain, than that this *unknown God*, who had delivered them from the Plague, was not look'd upon by them as the only *true God* or sovereign Being; there can remain no Doubt, but the particular Act of Worship they paid him on Occasion of this Deliverance, as well as the Worship they continued afterwards to give him, was an Act of Idolatry; and, farther, that we must ascribe to the Prejudices of their Education, in Favour of THOTH's *Cosmogony*, the Unhappiness and Misfortune of not improving this Occasion which God then afforded them, of coming to the true Knowledge of his Will. To procure them so great a Blessing and Happiness, another and last Effort of the divine Goodness and Wisdom, that was much more general or remarkable, was necessary; such was the Revelation and Publication of the Gospel.

I make no Doubt, but the wisest among them had a Notion of their Deliverer, agreeable to what the Apostles gives them, in Preaching him to them; since we find a great many *Pagans* I could name, as CI-

CERO

CERO in particular, who speaks of God in a Manner consistent enough with the right Notion *Christians* have of him, and ashamed to see so gross an Idolatry, as that which obtain'd still in his Time by Law establish'd, could wish that we might be induc'd to believe, that they look'd upon their different Deities, as only *allegorical*, and served merely to represent the different Attributes or Perfections of the supreme Being. But it is as certain, as St. *Paul* reproaches them with, that the greatest and wisest among them, mov'd by mercenary and selfish Views, thought fit to leave the Bulk of the People in the Ignorance of the Truth, and even to encourage them, both by their Examples and Authority, zealously to persist in the Worship of their ancient false Deities; and hence we must conclude, that those who were clear-sighted enough to believe there could not be more than one God, and he alone the Author of their Deliverance, were cunning, or wicked enough, which is not without Precedent in our Age, to suffer no Alteration in the State-Worship, foreseeing, no doubt, tho' with less Ability and Caution than our Politicians, that such a Change might instil in the Minds of the People, such a Knowledge, as would make them too rational, too free, and too couragious, and consequently

quently less sensible of being govern'd any longer by the Principles of a blind Superstition, and other specious and plausible Reasons which always terminate to the Profit and Advantage of the Governors, but very seldom to that of the Subject.

A fourth and last Inference, that the Remarks we have made upon this Passage *St. Paul* furnishes us with, is, that we cannot enough be sensible of, or sufficiently acknowledge, the Obligation we have to our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, for having brought us to the Knowledge of the true God, by the Calling of the *Gentiles*, whose Posterity we are, and for having confirm'd and establish'd us in this Knowledge, by the Principles of natural Religion he taught us, and which consists in making such an Use of our Reason, that we can pay to the Father a more rational and agreeable Worship, than that of the *Jews*; and this is what we are sure of performing, when we worship him in Spirit and in Truth, or in other Words, when we love him above all Things, and our Neighbours as ourselves. For, *If we pretend to love God without loving our Neighbour, we are Liars, and the Truth is not in us*, 1 John iv. 20. because 'tis impossible that the Profession we make of loving and worshipping God in Spirit, can be true, if the

the Love we ought to have for our Neighbour, is not as real as that we have for ourselves. God being an infinitely perfect Being, and consequently Self-sufficient, he has no need of any of our Oblations, and requires of us nothing but the Worship and Homage of our Hearts: An Homage we ought always to shew, by our perfect Submission and Confidence in him, and with Reference to our fellow Creatures, by the good Offices, and real Assistance we give them, each Time that a proper Occasion or Opportunity offers itself, and *Jesus Christ*, to shew us how reasonable and even this Doctrine is, declares to us, that all that he taught and revealed for the Good and Advantage of Mankind, is reduced to those two Precepts, which being no less the Dictates of Reason than Revelation, it follows, that natural and reveal'd Religion are the same, which will always appear clear and certain to those that duly consider the End and Design of Revelation, and its close Affinity and Connection with the first Principles of Reason or natural Religion.

I therefore conceive, that to know whether we are truly Religious towards God, and just and compassionate to our Neighbour, there is but one Rule to be observ'd; according to which we are to judge

judge of all our Thoughts and Actions; all that contributes to the Happiness of our Neighbour, is agreeable to this Rule, and all that tends to his Unhappiness, is contrary thereto.

Every sovereign Prince, that governs by this Rule, may justly boast of his being a *Christian Prince*, *do as you would be done by*; to govern by other Measures, is to be a THOTH. If those who set up for Ministers of the Gospel, would in earnest act by this Rule, they would then become *Christians* themselves, and cease to be *Anti-christians*.

It is by following these Principles, that every Man may render himself acceptable to God, and acquire all the Knowledge that is necessary to Salvation, and 'tis of such as sincerely retain and embrace them in their Hearts, that *Jesus Christ* speaks, when he says, that they shall know by the Conformity of this Doctrine, or Rule, to these Principles, or what is the same, to those two Precepts to which he reduces all the Law and the Prophets, whether this Doctrine is that of the Father; that is to say, a Doctrine agreeable to natural Religion, the one and the other still coinciding, unless the Principle or Sentiments that are naturally ingraved in the
Hearts

Hearts of all Men, be obliterated by their Vice and Wickedness, which I chuse here to call *Malice*; therefore, rightly to apprehend this close Relation and Connection, between the natural Disposition of our Mind, and that conscious Declaration of God's Will, I think it is proper to explain what I mean by this Word *Malice*, and what by Religion, in hope it will appear (tho' it be a Digression)

First, That *true Religion* can never depend on Authority, nor be taken upon Trust.

Secondly, That no Wickedness can be excused by the Ignorance of natural Duty, because such Ignorance, as our Saviour shew'd it, *John ix. 41.* and *xvi. 8, 9.* is certainly criminal; otherwise it would follow, that the *Pharisees* might be excusable for having condemn'd him, and that not only the *Jews*, but all the World besides, could not be justly reprov'd of Sin for not believing on him.

Thirdly, Another useful Inference which will follow from the Truth of this Sentiment, is, to shew the Importance and Necessity we are in at present, of setting a very great Value on the Study of our natural Duty, as being the best and most expeditious

Q

tious

tious Way we have to please God, and that the Ignorance of it deprives us of all the Means and Encouragements we naturally have within ourselves, as well as from the Gospel (whose chief Intent is to revive them in us) to become virtuous and happy.

By *Malice*, I do not understand any natural or occult Quality, by which some suppose that all Men are sooner inclined to do Evil than Good; but a real Thought and Reflection they make, and according to which they wilfully prefer an * imaginary Happiness to their Duty. I say, imaginary, because, tho' Experience should not teach us that it can never be a true one, Reason, or the Sense of our natural Duty does it in such a Manner, that 'tis impossible

* If the famous Archbishop of *Cambray* had said, that such a Happiness must be sacrific'd to God, as the best Token of our true Love to him, and to ourselves, since we can have no better Way to shew it him, than by doing our Duty, and thereby fit us for that perfect Happiness which he intends to give to all his rational Creatures, he had been in the Right; but as he suppos'd that that perfect Happiness itself, which is the only Motive directly appointed by him, as it appears by that Thirst after Happiness he has implanted in us, it follows, that to have attempted to change, as he did, this natural Means appointed by God himself, into another which he call'd *PURE LOVE*, is a Presumption, which, notwithstanding this his sublime Appellation he gives it, deserves no better Name than *Enthusiasm* or *Fanaticism*; because it leads out of that natural Method which is so clearly reveal'd in the Gospel, and so conform to our natural and securest Way of Thinking.

fible to conceive any manner of Happiness acquired, but by using a proper Means towards it, which consists only in the Discharge of our Duty. Such is the Order of Nature, or rather of God, who made it so; for God has not created Man happy, but only to become so by the right Use he should make of his Application and proper Endeavours directed by that Reason he is endowed with. Every Thing shews this to be true; since, from our Birth, till Reason affords us a Capacity and Willingness, we can do nothing of ourselves, without which we cannot be happy, because Happiness is never Happiness till we have deserv'd it. An Heir to a great Fortune, is, indeed, generally thought to be happier than another Man, who must work hard for his Bread; but I think it must be just the Reverse, because, this rich Man, if not virtuous, or which is the same, following strictly the Principles of Reason, which teaches us to please God, and *walk before him*, is in a greater Danger than the other to be perverted, by taking a Shadow for the Reality, as it always happens, unless a very strict Education serve to bring him to a more just exquisite Taste of his natural Duty, both towards God and his fellow Creatures; and this is the only Advantage he may, by his better Circumstances, have above the other, whose Steps towards Merit

must needs be flow'ring for want of proper Means.

But God is so strictly just, that whoever applies himself to know and do his Will, shall always be happy, as much as 'tis possible so to be at present, whether he be Poor or Rich; for if the ONE is *heavy laden*, he has the Comfort to hear within himself these comfortable Words, *Mat. xi. 28. Come unto me all ye that Labour, and I will give you Rest.*

But the OTHER, whose Burthen seems lighter, must needs, on the contrary, be always in Fear of not answering completely enough the Extent of his Duty; for as an Alloy to his apparent Happiness, he cannot avoid some Time to mind this dreadful Sentence, *Luke xii. 48. Unto whom much is given, of him shall be much required*, and happy is he if he minds it; happy, I say; for, as there can be no true Happiness to be expected in this World, he thereby puts himself in the Way of becoming perfectly so in the next; and thus at the same Time, the eager Desire we have of being perfectly happy in this Life, is rectified, and consequently the Danger remov'd, of being led into that fatal Mistake, wherein they all fall, who, without having fitted themselves for any Happiness,

Happiness, yet, in Spite of God's immutable Order, * whereby every body must merit his own Happiness, resolve to be happy IMMEDIATELY, thereby abusing that great Thirst and Desire after Happiness, which God has implanted in us, as the easiest and securest Way to attain it; and which Abuse, cannot be better, or more effectually prevented, than by considering Happiness as a Fruit that must not be gathered till it is ripe for us, or we for it; and therefore it always happens that those, who indulge themselves too much, or too fast, in satiating such a Propension, and dare wrest this Fruit before its Time, never fail to become the unhappiest of Men: And thence it follows, that the *chief*, or rather the *only* Thing we must do to be happy, is to mind our natural Duty, and set about it with a full Persuasion, that the Goodness of God will always attend us, and at last fill up our just and reasonable Expectations. To do otherwise is to be rash, unjust and wicked, and this is that which, in one Word, I term'd *Malice*; because such a Behaviour is as wilful, as the

* As no arbitrary Government can be establish'd, or support itself, but by destroying or reversing this Order, by feeding and pampering their idle and proud *Eloim*, that is, Friends and Followers, who can be the fittest, or the only Props of their Tyranny, this so fatal a Grievance might be very well rank'd among the others before-mentioned. CHAP. III. SECT. III.

the naturally known Will of God is glaring in every Man's Heart.

By natural Religion, which I here affirm to be the *only true Religion*, I mean not any occult Quality, which we know no more of, than how the Sun communicates its Light to us, but a rational Reflection made within ourselves; according to which, justly considering the Dependance we have upon the great Author of our Being, we think 'tis reasonable to prefer his Will to our own, being persuaded that this Preference and Regard we shew him, as the Sovereign or supreme Parent of All, and who became such only from the Principle of *his* own infinite Goodness, is the surest Means to engage the Continuance of this Goodness towards us, and consequently, that we cannot justly pretend to any Security or Increase of our Happiness, any longer than we continue in those Sentiments of Love and Gratitude towards him. This is the Manner in which I conceive that Men can only merit the Character of good or bad, righteous or unrighteous, virtuous or vicious, and by which alone we should distinguish the true Religion from the false one.

But this is not all, for we ought to conceive, that the Love of our Neighbour is contain'd

contain'd in the first Precept, and consequently that the second is not really different from it, and is only added because of the Shortness and Imperfection of our Capacity, that hinders us from comprehending the whole Extent of our Duty, under one single Notion or Idea.

If we could conceive at one View, the Reason why it is true, that when we pretend to love God, and at the same Time love not our Neighbour, that we are Liars, this would appear plain and evident; but to remedy this Imperfection which is inseparable from the Estate of a created Being, I observe this Method: I cease considering myself as the only Creature of God, and reflect or contemplate all the others he has also created, as Partakers of the same Nature with me; and then I conceive they are no less dear to him than I flattered myself to be, when I confined my Thoughts to myself alone.

When a Courtier imagines himself to be the sole Favourite of a Prince, we easily conceive, how far the Fondness and Partiality he has for himself, can carry him to the Prejudice of others; but as soon as he is sensible that he is not the sole Favourite, he has then quite another Notion and Idea of his own Sufficiency,

ency, and instead of fomenting Sentiments of Neglect or Contempt, for those other Favourites, as he did before, he, on the contrary, will shew great Regard and Respect for them, in Proportion as he by those Means hopes to support or advance himself in the Prince's Favour; being now fully persuaded, that he shall certainly lose that Favour, whenever he forfeits the Friendship or good Will of these other Favourites.

But as in the Sight of God, all Men, as Men, are equally dear to him, and in this Sense, he can have no peculiar Favourite, and as besides, he knows all the Springs of their Actions and Conduct, it is certain, that nothing can merit us his Love and Favour, nor consequently promote or advance our real Happiness, but a continual Attention to know and do his Will; this is to have or possess true Sentiments of Respect and Gratitude for him, and this is to worship him IN SPIRIT; but we should never persuade ourselves, that such Sentiments are sincere or real, but as far as they dispose us *to do to others, as we would wish they should do to us*, since this is the only Means by which we can satisfy God, or ourselves, of the Reality and Sincerity of those Sentiments; and this is properly to worship him IN TRUTH.

I will here draw two other Inferences from the Whole; one with Respect to Religion, and the other to Civil Government.

What relates to Religion, is, that we ought to judge nothing else * *Heresy*, but what is opposite to these two Principles, or rather to this single Principle of our Saviour's Religion; since, as I have shewn, 'tis certain there is but one which consists in WORSHIPPING THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH, or what amounts to the same, to *act for his Sake towards our fellow Creatures, as we would they should act towards us.* This being certainly so, the greatest Hereticks in the World, or rather the only ones, are those who would eradicate, or root out this Principle from the Minds and Hearts of Men, and who insist upon a blind Submission to dark, mysterious, and unintelligible Articles or Propositions, which have no Tendency to make us wiser or better, but only to establish a blind and boundless Power and Authority, that still is more opposite to the Good of Mankind, and more arbitrary and despotick over their several Rights

R

and

* This is conformable to St. Paul's Way of Thinking.
2 TIT. iii. 5. *From such turn away.*

and Properties, and even their Consciences, than any *Jesus Christ* abolish'd.

A second Inference which is to be drawn from this Discourse, with respect to civil Government, is, that it is not lawful for any Prince to make Conquests, nor to reduce any Nation to a State of Slavery, unless they are such as the Robbers or Banditti before-mention'd, whom Princes, for the Advantage and Security of good Subjects, are oblig'd to destroy, they imploying themselves wholly to do all possible Mischiefs and Injuries; but then this Slavery shou'd continue no longer than the Motive that occasion'd it; since, according to the Law of Nature, Effects should cease with their Cause; therefore the Children of those unhappy Slaves should not suffer for the Iniquities of their Parents, unless they continued to follow their bad Examples: For otherwise it would follow, that People or Nations might become the absolute and peculiar Property of Princes, which alone belongs to God; or, which is the same, that the Law I have shewn to be the only Rule of their Conduct, as well as every Man's Duty, might be abrogated; tho' it be certain, that the least Breach of it is an Invasion of the most essential Rights of the Creator.

I would end here, did I not foresee, that not only in the Case before-mention'd, but also in several others, there might arise some Doubts, that Governors are more inclin'd to interpret to their own, than the publick Advantage.

What's then to be done on such Occasions, that this eternal and unchangeable Law may be preserv'd in its full Force, which is of so great Importance for us to follow? And what Measure and Caution is necessary to take, that this Law, the only Law which merits the Name of FUNDAMENTAL, shall not be violated nor excluded?

The only Expedient that offers to my Mind in such Cases, would be to establish such a Balance of Power, that may be so equal, and so extensive, that all the Members of a State may be equally concern'd, and even have a Share in its Preservation: Such is certainly the perpetual Rotation of publick Posts and Offices, which Mr. HARRINGTON, in his Book intitl'd *Oceana*, presents us with.

And this Method I recommend the more willingly, because it agrees with the several

different Forms of civil Government, whether popular or monarchical.

But as this first and fundamental Law which recommends itself, since no-body can deny it to be the best of all, is alone sufficient to make all Men happy, if they would follow it, I would never recommend this, if the first could find that Place in the Hearts of Men it deserves, and 'tis only on Account of this Defect that I do it, and because I know not of any more proper to support and maintain the other, in Spite of all the Endeavours and Attempts of unjust and wicked Men against it.

Thus I recommend it as a good and faithful Servant; and the other, as the only Mistress who ought to be absolute; because she favours Merit only, and constantly protects those who love to know and do the Will of God, and are laborious, equitable, compassionate, and consequently always inclin'd to do to their fellow Creatures, as they would be done by in the like Cases.

This is the Way how all reasonable Creatures might become as happy as possible to be in this Life, and be at the same Time dispos'd to become perfectly so in the next, which Reason no less promises, than the Gospel itself, and which those will

will certainly enjoy who love to please God.

I do not pretend, when I recommend OCHANA's Method, to warrant it perfect and without Fault, but only to draw upon it the Attention of the learned and judicious, that it may be consider'd as a System of Importance, which might be easily rectified, and, when a little suited to the Genius and Situation of each Country, would certainly render the Inhabitants happier, and more tractable, than they are at present. And of this I am the more persuaded; that this Method, once admitted, would bring with her so considerable Advantages, that other Nations would eagerly desire to have it establish'd in their own.

And as the Tranquility and Happiness of each particular Man consists in enjoying peaceably what he has honestly acquir'd, and that the more he likes this rational and regular Way, the more carefully he avoids to do any Injury to his Neighbour; thus likewise I conceive, that each Country will, upon the same Principle, be contented to live on the Fruits it affords, and when it desires to have some Share in another's Product, will endeavour, not by Force, Stealth or Knavery,

but

but only on just and equitable Terms to obtain it.

Another still weightier Reason, which induces me to recommend OCEANA's Method, is, that it appears to me fitter than any to promote the Kingdom of God, since being once settled in a Country, there the Law must reign; and according to the Opinion of the best Philosophers, when, and wheresoever the Law reigns, *there is the Kingdom of God.*

Then, and then only, every Man is properly a Man, since he cannot thereby but be sensible, that he is in a Condition suitable to what God intended his Creatures, by endowing them with Reason and Understanding.

Then he can easily persuade himself, that he is as dear to his Creator, as those whom, before this, he saw with Amazement so much exalted above him, as if they had been of a different Species, and without being able to guess for what.

He knows it now; and, which is still better, he is sure, by this Method which we here recommend, that he himself may reach to the higher Ranks or Orders of civil Government, if his personal Capacity

city deserves it, or at least may contentedly live in a middle State, wherein enjoying his natural, as well as acquir'd Rights, he has the Pleasure and Satisfaction of being able, by his Influence, to raise those who deserve it most, and to depress and exclude such whose Conduct in their Elevation shew them unworthy of it.

Then Virtue and Probity will be honour'd; then no Nobility without both.

Then the Church shall have no other Bounds than the Universe; for then we may hope the fulfilling of the Prophecy, *Psal. cxiii. 3. From the rising of the Sun, to the going down thereof, the Lord's Name shall be praised.*

Then one may travel over all the Globe, and become wiser and better for it, and without any Fear from *Barbarians*, since such a Law, which is a Consequence of that true Knowledge which comes from the Father, being universally receiv'd, will banish all Barbarity from this World.

Then the Monarchy of God, and not of Men, will become universal. *Amen.*
Amen.



POST-

POSTSCRIPT

HAVING made the Reflections I thought necessary on Superstition and arbitrary Power, and establish'd a right Notion of true Religion and civil Government, I should proceed (according to my intended Purpose mention'd in the Beginning of this Discourse) and endeavour to set up SANCHONIATHO's Genealogy of the Antediluvian Men, and shew its Affinity with ERATOSTHENES's Canon; but as I cannot presume to do this Subject justice, without some Assistance, I at present omit it, and shall in some Books lately printed Abroad I have not yet been able to procure, tho' I have used my utmost Endeavour to obtain them, not to mention the better and more learned Reflections of some particular Persons and Acquaintance. I hope to have communicated to me on this Subject, I conceive I must stop for little Career here, and be content, and rejoice to see of what use this can be to the World, tho' my Sketch may have weight enough to bear the scrutiny, towards affecting the Right of the People of, as certainly it might, if some judicious Person did take me for such a proper Minister, as Bishop CAMBRIDGE expressed a Desire to have Page 10. of his SANCHONIATHO. But as I am far from entertaining such a Notion of myself, I will humbly wait and stand at the Mercy of God, and not

FINIS

POST